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22d ECLA Ministerial Meeting Opens in Rio

Cuba's Rodriguez Speaks

PY260207 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0021 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Rio de Janeiro, 25 Apr (EFE)—Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez today told EFE that the Latin American countries should study their problems together and design a plan of common action to face economic problems, especially the problem created by the foreign debt.

He believes it is necessary to find a path to development and to provide access to consumer markets to the 130 million Latin Americans who do not have access to such makets in order to reactivate their weak industries.

Rodriguez is heading the Cuban delegation to the 22d ECLA ministerial meeting, which opened here today.

Rodriguez said in his speech that despite mounting problems in the region, Latin Americans have not held such a strong attitude about progress since the days of independence.

He added that Latin America regressed 10 years during the last 5 years, and that the foreign debt increased in the last decade from $42.3 billion to $409,815,000,000, while "per capita" income and the GDP abruptly decreased.

Rodriguez pointed out that the Latin American and Caribbean countries imported capital and are now carrying this burden, which is bleeding them. This has deprived them of $145 billion in the last 6 years.

Rodriguez then praised the integrationist efforts of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, and criticized military solutions in the continent. He emphasized the firmness of Nicaragua, which "is finding its own solutions to problems that other countries wanted to solve by military imposition."

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, who is the highest-level Cuban official to visit Brazil since the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries 2 years ago, will meet with Brazilian President Jose Sarney on 28 April in Brasilia.

Further on Remarks

FL2604155288 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1015 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Never before has Latin America had before it an internal situation so favorable to change as it has now and not since the days the colonies first acquired their independence has the Latin American attitude been as firm and directed toward liberation and progress. This is an encouraging reality despite the tragedies that befall us.

These remarks were made yesterday in Rio de Janeiro by Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez at the ceremony marking the ECLA's 40th anniversary.

In the struggle for the new international economic order, stressed Carlos Rafael, the immediate issue uniting Latin American and Caribbean forces should be the foreign debt. Joining forces is essential, he said.

In reviewing the history of ECLA, he recalled that Latin America has regressed more than 10 years during the last 5 years.

The foreign debt, he said—which we warned about 15 years ago—has grown during that period from $42.3 billion to $409,815,000,000.

Carlos Rafael said that the Latin American and Caribbean countries which are poorly directed have not carried out the structural reforms that Cuba began and practiced years ago. These would allow them to develop an internal market that would be sufficiently large enough to solve the theoretical and practical problems noted by the ECLA analysts, he said.

The Cuban vice president criticized the restrictive policy of the United States. He said the stick-and-carrot policy which some people are stubbornly trying to bring back would be placed in permanent jeopardy.

As examples of firmness he pointed to Nicaragua because of the example it sets; the work of the Contadora and Support Groups; the meeting of the presidents of the Group of Eight, who issued a note genuinely defending the interests of Latin America; and Panama's current situation.

In reference to this last topic, Carlos Rafael said that the ECLA sessions on Panama have confirmed that the era of leaders and governments being replaced by diktat has been left behind.

Two immediate alternatives are offered by ECLA, he said: economic integration and structural changes. Our future lies in this direction, he said, and only we can implement it.

U.S. Envoy's Reaction Noted

FL2604143488 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez has said in Rio de Janeiro that it is essential for Latin America to join forces in the struggle for a new international economic order. Rodriguez spoke at the ceremony marking ECLA's 40th anniversary.

His unity speech forced the U.S. ambassador to respond to criticisms against Washington's policy. The controversy was followed with a response from Ernesto Melendez, minister president of the State Committee for

Economic Cooperation. He said that if the U.S. policy of economic aggression and blackmail does not change, the United States will have to hear criticisms in the future that are much more severe than the ones expressed here with control, seriousness, and elegance by Rodriguez because of the nature of the ECLA forum.

The Cuban minister said the speech given by the U.S. delegate was incoherent and typical of an irresponsible and thoughtless government.

Melendez Statement Cited

FL2604180488 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Report by Marta Valverde from Rio de Janeiro]

[Text] [Begin Carlos Rafael Rodriguez recording] We believe that this meeting of the ECLA, a forum in which Latin American economic problems are discussed, is exceptionally important. As the Brazilian foreign minister has just stated, it enables us to examine the ways and means by which we must coordinate our interests to defend our economies, to take part in the international process more solidly and strongly, and to face hostile contingencies in an international economic climate that is not favorable to us and that is making us experience difficulties at present. [end recording]

The speech by Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez is described here by the media as the most hard-hitting speech at the ECLA meeting, which began on Wednesday. Rodriguez spoke yesterday afternoon at the opening of the ministerial meeting of the ECLA's 22d period of sessions. He was the personality most sought-after by the participants and the media when the session ended.

Rodriguez stressed that Latin America had regressed economically more than 10 years in the past 5, and that the continent's foreign debt had grown more than 1,000 percent, whereas the per capita income and GNP of Latin American countries had plummeted and then stagnated. He noted that everything that had been said during the ECLA's 25th anniversary celebration in Quito about the tragic Latin American economy could be repeated now to a greater extent. Nevertheless, he voiced his hope that the continent would undergo a transformation in the future. Rodriguez emphasized that economic integration and structural transformations are the immediate alternatives for Latin America. In the struggle for a new international economic order, he added, the immediate rallying point is undoubtedly the foreign debt.

The Cuban vice president also said that the U.S. Government and its accomplices are to blame for the Latin American tragedy. He noted that ECLA is not one of the latter, since from its foundation it was always able to determine the root of the problem. He stressed that the first attempt some years ago to speak with one voice as Latin American was hushed by the United States, which imposed a number of military tyrannies in Latin America to squelch that incipient voice.

Ernesto Melendez Bachs, minister president of the State Committee for Economic Cooperation, is in Rio de Janeiro to head [as heard] the distinguished official Cuban delegation to the ECLA meeting. In a statement for Radio Rebelde, Melendez spoke about the main points that his country is bringing up at this meeting. [Begin Melendez recording] The major point is the serious economic, and consequently social, crisis prevailing in our countries. In this context, there's the unceasing struggle to find a response to the ills that still exist in our region in those [words indistinct] that should make a new life for our peoples a viable thing. [end recording]

Bolivia Seeks Moving of ECLA

PY260334 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2310 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] Rio de Janeiro, 25 Apr (EFE)—Bolivia today asked that the ECLA headquarters be removed from Santiago de Chile to a "democratic country that will allow ECLA to recover the privileged status it had in the past."

Carlos Gonzalez, the Bolivian representative to ECLA and Bolivian Foreign Ministry under secretary for integration and Latin American and Caribbean affairs, made this request today during the opening session of the 22d ECLA meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Bolivian representative reiterated that the first thing to be done is to decentralize ECLA into different ECLA branch offices for different technical levels.

In this way, Gonzalez argued, "free Latin Americans will be able to make their contributions and will not suffer repression and other threats to their individual rights."

The Bolivian representative said his country is experiencing a "difficult situation," referring to the century-old "forced confinement" as a result of "a war of expansionist aggression that deprived Bolivia of a free and sovereign outlet to the Pacific Ocean."

Gonzalez added: "In fact, as a result of this situation, Bolivia has seen its development hindered by the lack of an expeditious, modern, and economically viable outlet to the major international markets."

Bolivia lost its sea outlet during the "War of the Pacific" (1879-84), a war that Bolivia and Peru lost to Chile.

Cuba

Castro Discusses Rectification, Other Issues

PY261941 Montevideo LA HORA in Spanish 17 Apr 88 International Supplement pp 16, 17

["Exclusive" interview with President Fidel Castro by Estaban Valenti in Havana; date not given]

[Text] [Valenti] Daily activities in present-day Cuba are undoubtedly based on the rectification process. We have witnessed this in all our meetings. Almost 30 years have elapsed since the victory of the revolution. Why is it necessary to implement this rectification process, what are its origins and objectives, and what results have already been achieved?

[Castro] That question encompasses a wide range of issues. The implementation of the process to rectify mistakes has different causes. These may be mistakes that society has endured throughout history. I always cite as an example the case of discrimination against women, which is a negative aspect of history, a mistake throughout history. That is, we are struggling against these errors, be they old or new.

We have also defined it as new solutions for old and new problems. We have created some of these problems ourselves, that is, they are the unavoidable phenomena of a revolutionary process. There is no more difficult task than that of building a new world.

Therefore, despite the best of intentions, mistakes have been made. We have made some mistakes in the economic sector, in the use of economics. At a certain stage we made mistakes for the sake of idealism, an excess of egalitarianism; in a way we detached ourselves from the socialist system of compensation which establishes that each should contribute in keeping with his capacity and should be compensated in keeping with his work.

We labeled these mistakes as mistakes for the sake of idealism. But when we implemented the rectification process with the objective of rectifying those mistakes resulting from idealism, we made other mistakes which can be referred to as mistakes relating to "mercantilism." If at a given time we virtually did not grant any importance to material incentives, because we granted more importance to moral incentives, we later reached a stage during which we were granting excessive importance to material incentives and less importance to political work and moral incentives.

Therefore, when we proceeded to implement certain economic directives and planning systems in a country like ours, which had developed a great awareness of solidarity, a great internationalist spirit and where there had been an extraordinary development of voluntary work, people tended to believe that economic mechanisms by themselves were able to resolve problems. But this is an essential characteristic of capitalism and not of socialism.

Fraternity Among Men [subhead]

[Valenti] What importance do you grant to economic mechanisms?

[Castro] Economic mechanisms are necessary as a tool. But in socialism no economic mechanism will be able to resolve problems by spontaneous generation. When people here tended to think that these fabulous economic mechanisms, which on occasion were either invented or copied from capitalism, were going to resolve problems by themselves, we fell into a truly negative trend and we made a great mistake.

What is more, the role of the party began to decrease. It seemed that through spontaneous generation, these economic mechanisms were going to resolve all problems. If we were to continue with this, the party would end up being a monastic, religious order merely dedicated to domestic problems and not to the struggle with which to achieve development and the building of socialism.

Voluntary work began to decrease. I believe that when the spirit of solidarity begins to wane in a society, it loses one of the essential bases of socialism. I believe that the greatest merit of our revolution, its greatest achievement, is that concerning man; it is to have instilled in people one of the greatest spirits of solidarity among men; of fraternity among men. But this is a kind of solidarity that goes beyond the context of a mere fraternity. It is a socialist spirit that has reached the highest of levels, as in no other country.

The mistakes of idealism did not impede this. The mistakes of mercantilism conspire against those extraordinary values that were achieved by the revolution among the people.

Previously, there was voluntary work for everything. People offered their services to fix things, to work in factories—to help in the maintenance work in factories—to work in green areas. Everything was done through voluntary work. Later we experienced an excessive use of overtime pay, and virtually all those activities that earlier had been done voluntarily had to be paid through overtime.

It was simply that the spirit of solidarity had decreased. As people increasingly believed that money would resolve all problems, we became more money-conscious. Well, this was one of the negative trends, one of the mistakes we made.

I am talking about errors from the economic standpoint. The process of specializing in terms of workers' skills gained momentum. In 10 years the number of job

specializations increased from 8,000 to 14,000 specialities. This process translated into an inefficient utilization of working hours, because if you have to hire three men, each with a different skill, instead of one who can do three different jobs, your payroll will be three times more costly.

That is the trend both for capitalism and socialism, but for different reasons.

Some of these problems appeared because of revolutionary enthusiasm. One of them, which we have already talked about, is that of promotions. It got to a point where people were promoted on the basis of seniority, not on the basis of skills and qualifications.

I give you another example. Profitability, irrespective of quality, became the fundamental objective of a socialist enterprise. Quality was sacrificed for profitability, and the social importance of a product was neglected. Earnings made on products assumed overriding importance.

Thus a metallurgical enterprise that was supposed to manufacture 90 products manufactured only the 40 or 50 products that yielded greater profits. It ceased to manufacture those products that required more work and yielded less profit. In the construction area, moving of earth and sinking of foundation pilings—two very mechanized jobs—yielded more profit. So, construction enterprises focused their interest on new projects, not on the completion of existing work when the job is less mechanized, demands more labor, and yields less profit.

This practice began to appear right in the midst of the revolution, in the midst of our way of implementing socialism. These are examples of trends that we are in the process of eradicating.

[Valenti]: Whate were the causes of those errors?

[Castro] Many problems of this type came up. Some of them resulted from resorting to the experience of other socialist countries. In some cases, we copied bad experiences; in others, we made a bad job of copying good experiences in socialist countries.

In sum, this involves many things, technocratic trends or technocratic criteria. An example would be affirming that the construction of child care centers represents a social expenditure, and then turning around and saying that emphasis should be placed on economic investments, not on social expenditures. As the result of this, the demand for child care centers increased, but went unmet.

[Valenti] How many child care centers have been built in Havana this year?

[Castro] Fifty-four centers, each with a capacity of 210 children, were built last year.

[Valentin] And what was the average number of centers built previously?

[Castro] Over a 5-year period, five centers were built. Then in the years 1984-86 none were built. The minibrigades, which represented a strong movement for more than 15 years, began to lose momentum. These minibrigades used to resolve important problems, such as housing and social projects, by making more efficient use of the labor force. Because of such technocratic and theoretical ideas, an excellent solution for solving problems was abandoned.

[Valenti] A true Cuban solution?

[Castro] Yes, a true Cuban solution, an exclusively Cuban solution based on some theoretical criteria, on an original scheme that had never been used in other countries before. That is how we were able to build those child care centers, schools, and housing units, the construction of which had declined because of a labor shortage.

[Valenti] How is that? There is no unemployment in Cuba?

[Castro] Well, for lack of labor, housing units and other construction projects were not carried out in Havana Province. We had to bring labor from the country's eastern provinces. This aggravated the housing problem in Havana, because people who were brought in to work decided to stay in Havana.

We proposed that the population of Havana solve their own problems involving housing and social works with their own means. This meant that a factory with a work force of 1,000 workers would send 100 workers to build houses, nurseries, or hospitals, and the rest of the work force would do the job at the factory without reducing production.

However, technicians took the view that this would not work properly under the system of economic planning and direction. This was false. It has been proven in practice, in real life.

The factory pays the salaries of the brigades in this system, and the state returns the money to the factory. This helps to rationalize the system. In Havana, we already have 36,000 people working in the brigades on a very ambitious program of housing and social works.

The program slowed down at the end of 1976 with the implementation of the economic planning and direction system which copied many socialist experiences. Today, however, we are experiencing a resurgence of the brigades system. This time we have better organization and more strength and experience, and the system is much better developed. It has an impressive potential.

We believe the capital can provide 100,000 men for the brigades. Havana has 800,000 wokers. You can take 1 out of every 8 workers and put him in the brigades without affecting production or services, and you will have 100,000 people dedicated to building.

Havana workers do not like the construction field as a profession. They prefer a more secure job in a factory. However, they accept construction work gladly when the structures to be built are houses, nurseries, or other social institutions necessary for the population.

You can explain this better through your experience without having me explain the whole process. This is only one of the many items involved in the rectification process.

Social Works and Productive Infrastructure [subhead]

[Valenti] Is the rectification process applied only to the construction of social works, or is it also applied to the Cuban industrial and productive infrastructure?

[Castro] Well, it really involves everything. I talked about nurseries because it is social work from the technocratic viewpoint, which does not take into account that if the institution can take care of 210 children, then 210 young, healthy, and well-qualified women can be incorporated into production or services.

In a sense this is of tremendous help to the production of goods as well as to social improvements. You have to look for an adequate balance between social and productive investments.

You cannot go to the extreme of dedicating all your resources to the productive sector and nothing to the social sector. According to this idea, which appears to be optimal on the surface, you would be investing 100 percent of your resources in the production of goods, but you would have to stop building houses, schools, hospitals, and nurseries. Where would you end up then?

You would be doing something extreme. Technocrats often think of solutions that in their view are optimal, but that can end up a political disaster.

Mistakes were also made in the drafting of the economic plans themselves. There were negative tendencies in the development of the plans. A group of smart people—a planning commission—worked on plans that were out of touch with reality.

[Valenti] Do you discuss these projects with the people?

[Castro] The economic projects are discussed with all organizations throughout the year. This is one of the principles we have adopted instead of having a group of experts draw up theoretically perfect projects.

[Valenti] For example, do you discuss things with the unions?

[Castro] We discuss with the unions and their rank and file organizations such issues as the plan, the plan's proposals, their possibilities as far as production goes, the resources available, and the importance of what has to be done. We discuss; all the unions and their rank and file organizations take part in this discussion.

Of course, I will not tell you that the light industry unions participate in the drafting of the iron and steel industry plan. The metalworking, mining, mechanical industry, textile industry, and agricultural unions participate in the analysis, discussion, and drafting of their annual production plans.

The New Man [subhead]

[Valenti] One last question, a personal one. I belong to that generation that has adopted revolutionary ideas through the influence of the Cuban revolution and the unique contribution of some of its main leaders: yourself and Che Guevara...About the idea of the new man: Do you believe that, 30 years after the revolution, the issue of the new man is still alive?

[Castro] Che Guevara talked about the new man. This is the offshoot of another idea: that a new society has to create a new awareness, and therefore a socialist revolutionary process also has to create a new man. This new man must be more solidaristic, more altruistic, and much more generous and be able to treat others like brothers.

We advocate something that is also proclaimed by Christian doctrine: the fraternity among men, solidarity, unselfishness, and generosity, in addition to a high level of education, a high level of technical training, a patriotic awareness, and an international awareness. I do not pretend to name all the virtues; I just want to point out some elements of the new man about whom Che Guevara spoke. We cannot say that all men in our country are new men. Neither could we say that the youth are comprised entirely of new men. But our country has experienced a great change as far as quality of men is concerned. We have hundreds of thousands, a million, people, young blue- and white-collar workers and peasants who have the heightened awareness of what we call the new man.

The spirit for voluntary work that I have mentioned before is an example. The way to measure this spirit is the massive way in which tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, take part in loading and sifting the sand for some specific projects. That is, you find that voluntary work has become general in our current society in a way and to an extent unlike any other society.

The Spirit of Internationalism [subhead]

Another example is internationalism. When the Sandinist revolution achieved victory, the Nicaraguans requested teachers from us, and some 30,000 volunteered. Later we sent 2,000 teachers, most of them women. They went to Nicaragua's most distant places—to the mountains, where one arrives after a 3-day journey. After the counterrevolutionaries killed several Cuban teachers, more than 100,000—practically all the teachers in Cuba—volunteered to go there.

I ask if there is a capitalist society in the world, if there is any other country, where 100 percent [of the members of any given profession] volunteer for such a mission.

I will give you another example: In 12 years, more than 300,000 Cuban civilian and military workers have gone to Angola. They did not go to a party. They went to live under hard conditions. They have to run risks, not only the military, but also civilian workers.

Some 300,000 Cubans have gone to Angola. More than half a million Cubans have carried out international missions.

I can also mention our youth, youth who not only study, but who work at the same time. Take, for example, the high school students who help out with the crops. In Cuba, nobody fears to work with their hands.

We are always going to be dissatisfied with what we have accomplished. But the attitudes that would have caused great satisfaction, a great pleasure to "Che," are there. Because, to a large extent, this spirit of voluntary work is the fruit of the seeds that Che has sown, since he has been the leader and the pioneer, we must say, of the voluntary work, which he preached constantly with his example. The voluntary work is part of our people's awareness; it is a massive activity.

The cultural level of our youth is high. Our youth have a very high level of education. I would say that the most important feature of our youth is the spirit of solidarity and the spirit of internationalism. And these, in my opinion, are the most oustanding features of the new man.

U.S. Strategy, 'Pressure' on L.A. Scored

PA2604142488 Havana International Service in Spanish 1610 GMT 25 Apr 88

["Topics" feature with Amalia Sanmartino and Nestor Nunez]

[Text] [Nunez] Greetings, Radio Havana listeners. Amalia Sanmartino and Nestor Nunez will talk about the political and diplomatic actions recently carried out by the United States, which reveal a strategy to pressure Latin American nations. Amalia, would you like to begin?

[Sanmartino] Yes. Thank you, Nestor. I would like to begin by saying that it is worthwhile to mention that all the U.S. diplomatic actions are being carried out at a time when pressure is increasing on Panama. There are even rumors that a U.S.-directed coup d'etat will take place any day in Panama. That would be the final result of all the U.S. Government pressure on Panama in recent months.

At any rate, parallel to that, the United States has launched a diplomatic offensive throughout South America. This is to be expected because Argentina, Uruguay, and Peru [as heard] comprise the Support Group that cooperates with the Contadora Group. We all know that the Contadora Group advocates a political solution to the Central American conflict. Therefore, it is appropriate to mention that when the situation becomes difficult in a country, the United States launches a diplomatic offensive to change that situation. It is also appropriate to mention that very ugly pressures are being exerted on the South American countries.

A newspaper—in Argentina, I believe—reported that all these countries—meaning Argentina, Uruguay, and Peru—have been literally invaded by Yankee diplomats.

[Nunez] U.S. diplomats.

[Sanmartino] They are all top-level officials—for example, Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, and Vernon Walters, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. In other words, men who are characterized by their reactionary position.

[Nunez] U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese also.

[Sanmartino] Who, by the way, has been harshly criticized in the United States.

[Nunez] Exactly.

[Sanmartino] Nevertheless, he has gone to all those nations. The United States has tried to exert all kinds of pressure on those nations: political pressure... [changes thought] There were even reports that a coup d'etat was being planned in Peru.

[Nunez] Peru or Ecuador.

[Sanmartino] Exactly, Peru or Ecuador—who have both reacted irately. Vernon Walters complained in Buenos Aires that Argentina did not support him in Geneva concerning the human rights problem and the offensive that the United States had launched against Cuba. In other words, all kinds of pressure was exerted, and this coincides with...

[Nunez, interrupting] Excuse me.

[Sanmartino] Yes?

[Nunez] Excuse me for interrupting, but there is a peculiar situation in Argentina. Shortly before U.S. diplomats held a meeting in Buenos Aires, the U.S. Government refused to make Argentina's foreign debt payments more flexible.

[Sanmartino] Indeed.

[Nunez] We all know that Raul Alfonsin's government has tried to maintain a steady flow of foreign debt payments. Howver, when he asked the United States to authorize more flexible terms, the latter refused in a clear... [changes thought] I believe this is another link in the chain of pressure that you mentioned, and excuse me for interrupting.

[Sanmartino] No, no, no, it does not matter. Of course you are right, and I believe that this is part of the overall plan to exert pressure. We must also remember that Argentina is a country that has yielded to U.S. economic pressure. Argentina has implemented a series of adjustments that have mainly affected the working class. The government had to reduce salaries and implement a series of other measures. Despite all this, the United States continues to exert pressure, and the IMF refused to authorize more flexible terms for Argentina's foreign debt payments, as you said. All this is obviously part of the U.S. economic pressure.

[Nunez] Yes, it is part of the U.S. economic pressure.

[Sanmartino] Therefore, it is important to emphasize the implementation of this policy. It is not only an interventionist policy; it is also aimed at pressuring countries that have more progressive positions concerning the Central American conflict, so they will change their position.

[Nunez] Yes. Let us not forget that Vernon Walters publicly complained about his meeting with Uruguayan President Julio Maria Sanguinetti, simply because they did not see eye to eye on the U.S. Government's policy in Central America.

[Sanmartino] Obviously.

[Nunez] Likewise, I would like to mention that the United States has recently used something which, as a journalist, I believe represents the prelude to the U.S. diplomatic offensive in Latin America. U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese recently visited several Latin American nations in order to use the much-worn drug trafficking excuse to establish a so-called multinational force.

[Sanmartino] Oh, yes.

[Nunez] This specifically means that U.S. troops will be sent to different regions in South America under the pretext that they will fight drug trafficking. Well, this is clearly part of the U.S. strategy to secure bases in South America in order to exert pressure and intervene in case a social movement proves adverse to U.S. policies.

The United States has obviously tried to implement this policy in other countries. For example, Bolivia refused to accept U.S. troops after its bitter experience with the contingent of U.S. troops that was sent to the Bolivian jungle. The least thing they did was fight drug trafficking. Furthermore, I believe that Latin America has become aware—and this has been confirmed by the official statements issued by several governments—that the drug trafficking problem must be first solved in the United States.

[Sanmartino] Of course.

[Nunez] The U.S. marijuana harvest in 1985 exceeded the corn harvest. Likewise, drug trafficking profits are much higher than the profits earned by any consortium in the United States.

[Sanmartino] Of course.

[Nunez] Well, this entire situation... [changes thought] Likewise, there is an unlimited consumption of drugs, so the country has logically become a great market for drug traffickers. In other words, the United States has to begin by solving its domestic problem. Well, I wanted to emphasize this, but I also wanted to mention that Edwin Meese's tour is part of the strategy to exert pressure and seek, ah...

[Sanmartino] Support?

[Nunez] Yes, support for the U.S. policy.

[Sanmartino] It is very interesting to see, Nestor, how pressure is exerted according to the U.S. views about the situation in other countries. For example, you know that Mexico is a country that has traditionally supported the needs of and political solutions in Central America. The United States tried to implement a boycott against Mexico by bringing up drug trafficking charges, and it has tried to discredit Mexico's internal policy. This is also another form of pressure. In other words, the United States has exerted economic and political pressure in an attempt to gain support, because those countries are important for its plans.

[Nunez] Of course. I believe the diplomatic battle waged at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, when Latin America curtailed the U.S. plans to unjustly condemn Cuba; the fact that the Contadora Group and Support Group exist; and the fact that the Group of Eight was created—that is, a group of Latin American presidents interested in solving Latin American problems with Latin American solutions—have caught Washington's attention. All this pressure is clearly aimed at breaking the Latin American unity that is quickly developing in the region. The people have become

increasingly aware that it is necessary to solve our problems with our own solutions without intervention or interference by a country, or a government, that is only trying to undermine our efforts and maintain the structures that have traditionally exploited us and that have led to our current chaotic situation.

Dominican Republic

Balaguer Suspends All Projects for 60 Days

FL2604205388 Santo Domingo Radio Mil Network in Spanish 1150 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] President Joaquin Balaguer last night said that the time has come for his government to adopt important measures that will influence the course the country's economy must take.

In a speech in which he announced the suspension for 60 days of all his government's projects, Balaguer also said that the hour has arrived for each Dominican to sacrifice some of his comfort for the general welfare.

The president observed that all opinions expressed over radio and in other media try to blame his government for the Dominican economic crisis.

Balaguer said that he personally objected to the claim that the rise in the dollar rate, which he said was scandalous, is the fault of his government. It is his opinion that his policy is responsible for the revitalization of the economy.

The chief of state says it is indisputable that industries which in the 1950's and 1960's operated with less capital today do not have sufficient installed capacity to satisfy the demands of the public, which requires an increasing number of goods and services. The president then said:

[Balaguer] "It is also undeniable that many people belonging to the country's working class are loath to take jobs offered to them in industry and the agricultural-livestock sector; for example, jobs picking coffee and cacao, in the sugar industry, etc."

In Dr Balaguer's opinion, the Dominican workers' resistance to employment in industry and the agricultural-livestock sector is what makes possible the substitution of Haitian labor for native labor.

[Balaguer] "For example, as a mere apprentice, a construction worker gets 20 pesos a day. If he is a mason with high-level or medium-level skills, his wage is approximately 35 pesos daily. In the case of very highly qualified workers, they even get transportation and food. We also have the disadvantage that employers prefer the Haitian worker to the Dominican worker. That preference stems from practical reasons, which need not be spelled out at this time."

Grenada

United Labor Party Suspends Deputy Leader

FL2604020488 Bridgetown CANA in English 2006 GMT 23 Apr 88

[Text] St George's, Grenada, April 23, CANA—The opposition Grenada United Labour Party (GULP) has temporarily suspended two executive members including its deputy leader Dr Raphael Fletcher, the hand picked successor of party founder/leader, former Prime Minister Sir Eric Gairy, state-owned Radio Grenada reported.

The decision to suspend Fletcher, a 58-year-old physicist, was made during a meeting on Friday of the GULP's general council and executive body.

Ronnie St Louis, a brother of opposition Parliamentarian Phinsley St Louis, was named as the other suspended member.

Radio Grenada quoted Sir Eric as saying the suspensions were part of a house cleaning exercise which he said was in the best interest of the party, the oldest there. Gairy told reporters that Fletcher was being suspended in order to investigate allegations surrounding his connections with Lib ere he had worked for some time. The reasons for St Louis' suspension were not made public.

Sir Eric said that Dr Fletcher was invited to this morning's meeting to give his side of the story but called to say that he had other pressing commitments, Radio Grenada said.

We can't say we believe he (Fletcher) was involved in Libya. We can't say we don't. We hope that he was not because we like him, Gairy told reporters.

Fletcher was appointed in December to the number two post in the GULP with the intention of eventually taking over the mantle of leadership from Sir Eric Gairy, who announced that he was bowing out of frontline politics due to failing health.

A relative newcomer to Grenadian politics, Fletcher is a Grenada island scholar and former faculty dean at the University of the West Indies. He taught extensively in the Caribbean, London, and Africa and had a brief stint at the Libyan Higher Institute of Learning as a lecturer in its science and technology department.

The GULP has already postponed until June 26 a convention it had planned for April 24 at which it was widely expected Fletcher would have assumed the leadership.

The GULP, which won only one of the 15 seats in the 1984 general election, has already launched its campaign for the next national poll, due next year.

'Rumors of Communist Presence, Activity' Noted

FL2704012688 Bridgetown CANA in English 2336 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Excerpt] St George's, Grenada, April 26, CANA — Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), in a just-published report on poverty in Grenada, says there seems to be growing discontent among the population. The CCC said that its team of surveyors formed this impression after spending three weeks visiting 118 communities and interviewing community members, heads of churches, civil servants and others.

According to the report, the unemployment situation is causing grave concern in Grenada and government's decision to retrench 1,800 civil servants is not a popular one. The CCC estimates that about 3,000 Grenadians have lost their jobs since the downfall of the 1979-83 Peoples' Revolutionary Government (PRG).

The Herbert Blaize administration estimates unemployment to be running in the order of 20 percent of the labour force. The report said there was great dissatisfaction on the island regarding the standard of education and the delivery of health services.

"The lack of infrastructural development and housing conditions are the primary concerns of the average Grenadian, especially those in the rural areas/communities," it said. The CCC stated that Grenadians do not seem convinced or reassured by government's promise of "better days ahead" through foreign investment which it hopes to attract.

"Young people seem disillusioned and once again seeking an alternative. There are rumours of "Communist" presence and activity in Grenada and the sister islands of Carriacou and Petit Martinique," the CCC commented.

An underlying tension still exists on the island and there are those who prophesy that the stage and scenario are once again being set when history will repeat itself and the Spice Isle will erupt once again. [passage omitted]

Haiti

Former Leader Duvalier Faces Trial in France

LD261107 Paris International Service in French 0800 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Jean-Claude Duvalier will be tried in France. The former Haitian dictator, charged with embezzling $120 million, will have to appear on 27 June before the French courts. Jean-Claude Duvalier withdrew to Grasse in the south of France with his family and those close to him 2 years ago.

Action Committee Calls for New Elections

FL2604162588 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1600 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] The civilian society initiative group in favor of respect for the Constitution again protests the fact that the results of the elections for the Casecs [Administrative Councils for the Rural Sections] have not been published.

The cooperative action committee writes: Numerous citizens are rightfully worried about the fate of an institution, the Casecs, that are consecrated by the Constitution as constituting the very foundation of the democracy desired by the vast majority of the Haitian people.

The committee continues: For their part, those who ran in the unconstitutional and fraudulent elections of 31 January 1988 are clamoring to be installed in the coveted positions. In anticipation of the results of the rigged elections, certain of these people are proclaiming themselves Casec members and do not hesitate to burden the citizens under their jurisdiction with taxes as freakish as they are arbitrary. As one can well understand, such dishonest initiatives meet with protests and vehement resistance on the part of the rural population.

The Cooperative Action Committee for the Respect of the Constitution [Creole used: Komite Tet Ansanm pou Hone, Respe, Konstitisyon an] thinks that this is a very serious problem which, if not properly resolved, will inexorably lead to abuses and to dangerous confrontations.

The committee says that it sees the profiles of two false and unconstitutional solutions to the Casec problem emerging. The first has the men in power continuing to turn a deaf ear to this matter and continuing to govern without the Casecs, which are the very foundation of the structure provided for in the Constitution. In such a case, the (?structure) would be destroyed, says the committee. Without the Casecs, there are no municipal assemblies, no departmental assemblies, no interdepartmental council, and no Permanent Electoral Council, and thus, no decentralization, no participation, and no democracy, the committee adds.

The second false solution cited by the committee would be the belated publication of the results of the so-called elections of 31 January 1988. This would constitute a new and serious violation of our Constitution, according to the committee.

It goes on: Neither the CEP [Provisional Electoral Council] installed after the 29 November massacre nor the de facto government in power since 7 February 1988 are empowered to validate or to annul any electoral process whatsoever.

According to the cooperative action committee, the citizens and organizations of this country should demand that the CEP be reconstituted, in compliance with the dispositions of Article 289. The mission of this constitutional CEP shall be to organize democratic elections at all levels within a reasonable length of time. If this course is not taken, the nation, as it did in 1957, will fall back into the trap of arbitrariness, corruption, extreme poverty, and violence. Those who choose to (?place their weapons) above the Constitution and their personal ambitions above the national will shall bear full responsibility for this, the committee's statement concludes.

The statement bears the signatures of Pastor Pauris Jean-Baptiste and Father Antoine Adrien.

High Costs Blamed on Antismuggling Measures

FL2604171588 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1600 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Excerpts] Governmental measures against smuggling are being applied in several Haitian ports open to overseas commerce. Products were confiscated in Port-de-Paix, Miragoane, and Saint-Marc last week.

Roadblocks to prevent smuggling have been set up. [passage omitted] Prices have clearly risen following the application of these measures, particularly in Gonaives, as [correspondent] Edgard Bruno is going to explain.

Furthermore, three ODPG [expansion unknown] employees have been arrested. Here is Bruno:

[Bruno, in Creole] The price of basic items are greatly increasing in Gonaives and other parts of the Department of the Artibonite. Consumers who buy these foodstuffs are beginning to howl. [passage omitted]

On the one hand, consumers are beginning to howl because they cannot buy anything because most of them are unemployed. On the other hand, the ship owners too are complaining that the taxes are too high. Several of them told us that if the Haitian Government does not lower the taxes, they themselves will have to continue to raise the price of their merchandise. If they have to, the unfortunate consumers will suffer the consequences. [passage omitted]

The situation is the same in the marketplaces in Saint-Michel de l'Atalaye and Ennery, where consumers are continuing to complain. [passage omitted]

Moreover, the police in Gonaives have arrested Antoine Prudent, a citizen from Gonaives who works as a stock keeper for ODPG, which is the institution in charge of developing the Gonaives plain. He was arrested last Wednesday, 20 April, without a warrant. No one knows why he was arrested.

Since his arrest, he has been sitting on a bench in the guardhouse of the Toussaint Louverture Barracks in Gonaives. That is where he sleeps. They won't let him go anywhere at all. Journalists are not allowed to approach him.

Antoine Prudent's lawyers, Mr (Antoine Saint-Vil) and Mr (Dieuseul Placide), consider this an illegal, heavy-handed act. Therefore, they summoned the representative of the Department of the Public Prosecutor, Mr (Renan Jean-Baptiste), to come explain why heavy-handed arrests without a warrant are still being made in Gonaives.

The government representative said he knew absolutely nothing about the matter, but reports from court circles in Gonaives say that this same government representative wrote ODPG Director (Joseph Simon Millien), an agronomist, asking him to come explain why the man was being arrested. [passage omitted]

There is much indignation in Gonaives over this arrest because Prudent, who was arrested together with two other citizens, (Joseph Saint-Fleur) and (Jean Louis), has suffered much humiliation at the Toussaint Louverture Barracks in Gonaives. They all have spent more than 5 days sleeping on a bench there, not even able to wash.

No one knows how this affair is going to end. The men are still at the barracks. As we said, the police arrested them on Wednesday, 20 April, and no one knows why. [passage omitted]

Peasants Mobilize To Prevent Land Survey

FL2604163888 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1100 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Excerpts] There is a problem in connection with the surveying of land in the (Zabriko) area, in the commune of Hinche. A group of some 50 peasants stopped a surveyor from dividing a piece of land, and the matter is now before the courts. Let's listen to the correspondent's report:

[Passage omitted] (Jean Robinson), who is from Hinche, arrived in (Zabriko) on Thursday, 14 April, with a surveyor, (Abel Casimir); a law-enforcement officer: and several other persons.

(Robinson), who claims to be one of the heirs to 232 carreaux, had gone to measure and set off 50 carreaux as his part of the inheritance. In an instant, more than 600 [figure as heard] peasants mobilized, armed with machetes, clubs, and so forth. The peasants declared they did not acknowledge (Robinson) as an heir. Thus they forbade the surveying.

More than 30 years ago they had entrusted the deeds to that land to one of the (?oldest persons) in the family in question—(Luis Louis), also known as "(Bondo)." The peasants were astonished to see the surveyor pull this

same document out of his file in order to survey the land. The peasants said this gave rise to great pressure against both the old man "(Bondo)" and the surveyor, who had to drop the deed and flee.

On 22 April, four of the heirs to these 232 carreaux of land appeared at the office of the Department of the Public Prosecutor with more than 50 peasants to explain who had the deed at present and certain other matters.

But since old "(Bondo)" had turned the deed over to (Robinson) without the consent of the other heirs and since "(Bondo)" had sold off a big portion of the land without anyone else's consent, they have decided to henceforth have another member of the family hold the deed. [passage omitted]

We will follow this matter and keep you informed, because it looks as though it is not yet over.

Armed Commando Said To Attack Truck Passengers
FL2604155088 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1800 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Report from Mirebalais correspondent (Johnny Decamp)]

[Excerpt] Last Friday night, an armed commando attacked a group of passengers [words indistinct] heading for Port-au-Prince. The attack took place at a little place called (Platon Bras d'Homme), which is very near Morne Cabrit. Two people were wounded.

The truck habitually transits the area. Upon arriving at (Platon Bras d'Homme), the driver asked the passengers to get out because he had no brakes. A few minutes later, a group of assassins appeared and shot at the passengers; two people were wounded.

Thus many people are asking what kind of security there is on that road, with a bunch of armed assassins lurking about to shoot at passengers. [passage omitted]

Trinidad and Tobago

'Bickering' Within Ruling Party Continues
FL2604023288 Bridgetown CANA in English 2215 GMT 24 Apr 88

[Text] Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, April 24, CANA—Speaker of Trinidad and Tobago's House of Representatives, Nizam Mohammed, has criticised his former deputy in a public letter as bickering within the ruling National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) continued.

In a letter handed out to the media in Parliament during the Friday afternoon sitting of the house, Mohammed commented on press reports indicating that a NAR tribunal under his former duputy speaker, Anthony Smart, had cleared Mohammed of wrong-doing charges. The tribunal had been set up under Junior Legal Affairs Minister Smart to consider and frame possible charges against so-called dissidents within the 16-month ruling party.

Mohammed noted in his letter that the press article had also said that the file on Mohammed did not contain any incriminating evidence. Mohammed, one of the few remaining members of the former United Labour Front (ULF) party in a position of authority in the NAR administration, said he had expected a denial of the articles contents from Smart who had been his former duputy and who understood the dignity attributed to the office of house speaker.

I consider this article to be damaging to the dignity of the office of speaker in the House of Representatives. I consider it further disgraceful and dishonourable that your tribunal engaged in such defamatory witch-hunting of the type inferred in the article should include the office of the speaker, Mohammed's letter read.

As I have not heard anything from you, it has now become incumbent upon me to publicise my feelings on the matter.

Ammunitions Depot Explosion Kills 6 People
FL2704123288 Bridgetown CANA in English 2350 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, April 26, CANA—Six people—four fire officers and two soldiers—were killed in an explosion at an ammunitions depot near an army barracks in North West Trinidad on Tuesday, officials said.

The explosion was triggered by a bush fire.

Fire officials said about 40 men from the nearby defence force Tetron Barracks and the Chaguaramas Fire Department were putting out the bush fire when the explosion took place at 3:20 P.M..

The 80 by 30 foot ammunition building, affected by the heat of the bush fire, exploded, blanketing the whole area with smoke and debris. Most other buildings in the area were immediately destroyed and firefighting equipment and men were seen flying off the hillside where they had been fighting the bushfire, eyewitnesses said.

Killed were two army officers whose jeep was climbing up the hill to supervise another operation going on in the area. The explosion blasted the jeep carrying 25-year-old Lieutenant Jeffrey Waldron, and 30-year-old Lance Corporal N. Ali, the driver of the jeep, some 200 metres away.

Fire officers said they later dragged the bottom half of Waldron's body from the jeep. The rest was not found. Ali's body was described as mashed up.

The four fire officers who died were on a fire engine which was being used on the hill. It flew through the air to a few metres from the jeep. Fire officials declined to give out the names of the four firemen until their relatives could be contacted.

Most of the men fighting the bush fire had been from the army. Some three fire units with eight fire officers had been working on the fire.

The area, known as Camp Omega, is used for defence force drilling exercises. It is a rugged, hilly valley a few miles off the main road which runs along the coast of the north west peninsula. Journalists, defence force officials, and members of the public allowed into the valley Tuesday afternoon found the hill on which the depot had been sited and the opposite face of the hill completely devastated.

An official told CANA, the explosives were kept under lock and key by the police. The police stored the explosives at the Omega Camp with army permission.

I am absolutely astounded to see what has taken place here this evening...national security minister, Senator Herbert Atwell, said after touring the area.

Ironically, around the time of the explosion, officials had been nearby viewing new equipment received from the Canadian Government to contain bush fires from the air.

Chief Fire Officer Mack Copeland said the fire service lost four engines in the blast.

Costa Rica

Arias Discusses Situations in Panama, Nicaragua

Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish
1-2 Apr 88 p 9

[Interview with President Oscar Arias Sanchez by Jose Maria Brunet in San Jose; date not given]

[Excerpt] [Introductory passage omitted] [Brunet] What contribution do you believe Spain could make to peace in Central America, and of what help was Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez' 3-day stay in your country?

[Arias] I have a great friendship with Felipe, of which I feel very proud. I believe that he is a leader and that the Spanish people should also feel proud to have a skillful, intelligent, and knowledgeable politician leading their country. When I visited Spain last May on a tour of Europe to seek support for the peace plan which I had put forward and which the international press christened the Arias plan, I extended an invitation to Felipe, as well as to the king and queen of Spain, to visit us during my term, which, as is known, has a 4-year limit, with no possibility of reelection. I pressed Felipe somewhat to come, because nobody is unaware that he was a good friend of Omar Torrijos and has been very close to Panama and its people, and because he had announced a few days earlier that Spain would be prepared to receive General Noriega if he wished to go and live there. Since the situation in Panama was in so great a degree of conflict, this was the best opportunity. The meeting was very positive. We wish to seek a solution to the Panamanian people's problem as soon as possible, and we believe that it is necessary to be constructive in this. The experience of the peace plan shows us that dialogue is successful if there is a will, and we wish to advise Panama, just as we have advised the countries in conflict in Central America, that the government should talk with the opposition forces and that Msgr McGrath should act as a mediator for us. We believe that, just as happened in Nicaragua with Obando y Bravo, the Panamanian church's top representative has the moral authority and the respect and trust of all the parties involved in the Panamanian conflict.

Noriega [subhead]

[Brunet] Do you believe that the resolution of the Panamanian crisis necessarily involves Gen Noriega's departure for Spain?

[Arias] As we all know, the general himself has stated that he is prepared to relinquish his post. I believe that we should not out-Herod Herod, and if he is willing to relinquish his post, what must be sought now is how and when. Felipe Gonzalez, Carlos Andres Perez, Daniel Oduber, and I are not going to resolve that. The Panamanians must resolve it by talking. That is why we have asked for the most sensible thing: That Msgr McgRath act as a mediator and that they sit down and talk. I trust that Noriega will accept McGrath's mediation. Let us hope that this is so, because I believe, after pondering it hard there in Guanacaste, that it is the solution. It is necessary to be constructive and to provide opportunities, and it is certain that a golden opportunity for finding a solution to the Panamanian conflict very soon is the Archbishop of Panama City's mediation.

[Brunet] It is known that you also discussed in detail the case of Nicaragua, where the agreement between the Sandinist government and the contras has aroused many hopes of peace...

[Arias] I have asked Felipe to support the Sapoa agreement. The whole world's support will ensure success for the agreement, which, moreover, was inconceivable just a few weeks ago. It was not even believed that the parties in conflict could sit down around a table. The press knows that until very recently the Nicaraguan president was saying that he himself would never talk with a contra leader and that it was inconceivable that they could sit down and talk. The important thing now is to perfect the agreement and to start discussing details, and the next meeting, on 7 April, is for that purpose. We must support that agreement because there are enemies, because there are people who do not want dialogue and agreements reached which would end the war—a cruel and bloody war which has left 60,000 dead.

Democracy in Nicaragua [subhead]

[Brunet] Do you believe that, following the agreements, a system of full democracy can be consolidated in Nicaragua?

[Arias] I believe that we five Central American presidents who reached an agreement 7 August last year have an historical pride and should honor our signing of it. And in that agreement we pledged to democratize the Central American countries, which do not enjoy full democracy. It is very clear in the peace plan what democratization means. And my view is that so far the war has been used as an excuse. Perhaps it is not a mere excuse but the main reason for being unable to move toward Nicaragua's full democratization. But if it is not, it has at least been used as an excuse for not moving toward that pluralist society which we all want for the Nicaraguan people. Now that that excuse, which is the war, has been eliminated, there is no reason for not moving forward. If this is not done, the letter and spirit of the peace plan will be breached. And I believe that the world at large will be the judge, the arbiter that the Guatemala peace agreement is not flouted.

[Brunet] In your appearances with Felipe Gonzalez you repeatedly expressed the fear that the Sapoa agreements, as you now repeat, have enemies. Where do you see the dangers and how can they be avoided?

[Arias] There are obviously people who believe that the Sandinists have ended up making certain concessions because of military pressure, and that it is not possible for the Guatemala agreement to be implemented without it, without a war. With all due respect, I disagree with those who take this view.

[Brunet] What is the state of your relations with the United States right now?

[Arias] They are relations of friendship and respect. Friendship entails being very open, very sincere. Friends disagree one day and agree another. We have a long-standing friendship with the United States. It is a country which has helped Costa Rica on many occasions and in many spheres; not just in the political sphere, as when Somoza invaded us in the past, but in the efforts to develop Costa Rica, in which the United States has always been involved. And now nothing is going to spoil that friendship. The fact is that, as I was saying, friends agree one day and disagree another. In the sphere of Central American politics, of how to resolve the conflicts in Central America, I have disagreed with Washington in the sense that I believe that those conflicts should be resolved through political negotiation—not through war. When I came to power, the Contadora proposal was under discussion. I always supported that proposal as I did much later, in February 1987, when I made Costa Rica's peace proposal. So from the previous 8 May through 15 February I supported Contadora, and that was incompatible with supporting the contras. And I told Washington so. Just as now the peace plan agreement—the Esquipulas II agreement—is incompatible with the continuation of the war and with further military aid to the insurgent forces. So I have spoken very categorically against giving them further aid. And I have done so with all the parties. I have sent Gorbachev a letter. In that letter I explain that in the United States I have used the means allowed by democracy to express my viewpoints. I have spoken personally with President Reagan, I have been able to address Congress, and I have used the news media to explain my views, but in the case of the Soviet Union that cannot be done, and so I decided to send Mr Gorbachev a letter. In it I ask Mr Gorbachev again to take his hands off Central America, and tell him that as long as he continues to assist the insurgent forces—the Salvadoran guerrillas, the Guatemalan guerrillas—in any way, just as Cuba does, it will be very difficult to pacify Central America. And let us not be told that they agree with the peace plan while, on the other hand, they continue to assist those guerrillas.

[Brunet] Do you not believe that the Sandinist regime represents a threat to the United States?

[Arias] If it is going to represent a threat, it is more a threat to the countries in the area than to the United States. For us it is certainly a source of great anxiety that Costa Rica is the first country in the world without an army and not belonging to to any kind of military alliance, and that it has as a neighbor, a Marxist country, with an expansionist ideology. The fact is that when I am told these things, my reply is that I have great faith in the democratic values of the Costa Rican way of life. I am quite certain that democracy is much more efficient as a political system for meeting human beings' needs. I believe that Marxism has failed in the world. I believe that, especially in the underdeveloped countries, it is not the right answer for poor societies. And Costa Rica is a good example of how a richer, fairer, and more egalitarian society can be built within a democratic system. [passage omitted]

Madrigal, Israel's Peres Sign Joint Communique

PA2604202088 San Jose LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 19 Apr 88 p 3

[Excerpt] The States of Israel and Costa Rica will continue to strengthen their economic relations in order to encourage development. In addition, the two countries praised the UN General Assembly's resolution calling for a special economic aid plan for Central America.

This was stated in a joint communique signed by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Costa Rican Foreign Minister Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto.

Other points on which they agreed include their full support of efforts by developing countries to encourage international economic cooperation with industrialized nations; the foreign debt problem, which is a grave economic and political problem confronting developing countries; and a resolution to study the possibility of undertaking joint technical assistance projects.

Madrigal and Peres expressed their hope that Central American problems will be resolved with the implementation of all the clauses of President Arias' peace plan.

The two ministers also discussed aspects relating to peace in the Middle East. Madrigal Nieto officially invited Shim'on Peres to visit Costa Rica, an invitation that Peres accepted with pleasure. The date for that visit will be agreed upon by the two governments. [passage omitted].

Briefs

New Ambassador to U.S.

Costa Rica's new ambassador to the United States, Danilo Jimenez Vega, has his credential letters. According to normal procedures, the new ambassador is to be received by the U.S. secretary of state, to whom he should present a copy of the credential letter and a copy of the statement he will make in presenting his credential letters to President Reagan. This will be done at a date to be established in the future, but the new Costa Rican ambassador to the United States can function as such already. [Summary] [*PA2604212788 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1830 GMT 26 Apr 88*]

Cocaine Shipment Seized

Authorities have arrested two people in connection with luggage confiscated at the Juan Santamaria Airport containing 8 kg of cocaine. One person is named Alpizar, who is an airport customs employee. The other person, identified as Salas, was to receive the drug, which was for local consumption. [Summary] [*PA2604171788 San Jose LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 19 Apr 88 p 10*]

El Salvador

Army Reports Casualties Inflicted on Rebels

PA2604224188 San Salvador Radio Cadena Sonora in Spanish 1700 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Good morning Radio Cadena Sonora listeners, this is a report from Usulutan. At 0200 today, rebel groups attacked the National Guard posts in Mercedes Umana, northern Usulutan, for over 30 minutes. Two rebels were killed and five were wounded during this attack.

It has also been reported that in Cerro El Portillo village, Mercedes Umana, three rebels were wounded during a skirmish with the 15 September Battalion in Cerro El Portillo.

This morning, the rebels intensified their actions against the electricity system installations, blowing up five power pylons and three transformers in Santa Anita and La Ceibita, Mercedes Umana, northern Usulutan. Other reports add that at 0200 today, the rebels partially destroyed the Institute of Supply Regulation installations in Mercedes Umana.

FMLN Claims Inflicting 96 Casualties in 1 Week

PA2604132088 [Editorial Report] (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador at 0000 GMT on 26 April carries approximately 15 minutes of battle reports.

According to the first report, from 18 to 23 April, the FMLN inflicted on the Army a total of 96 casualties, counting dead or wounded. In addition, three railroad trains were sabotaged. One of them was totally destroyed during a clash in Santa Gertrudis, San Vicente Department. The FMLN reports destroying La Zorra Bridge located on the road from Tecoluca to El Playon in San Vicente Department.

Furthermore, an Army UH-1H helicopter was damaged in Torola Jurisdiction, Morazan Department. Another UH-1H helicopter was damaged in (Portillo Los Planes), Chalatenango Department.

Radio Venceremos stresses the importance of a 20 April operation called: Only through incorporation and organized struggle will the people conquer freedom, peace, and justice. In this operation, the garrison of the so-called Civil Defense in Puerto Parada, Usulutan Department was attacked, taken over, and destroyed. In addition, the following war materiel was seized during this operation: four M-16 rifles, three M-14 rifles, one communications radio PRC-77. Also, 1,500 cartridges, 9 knapsacks, 21 pairs of military boots, and other war materiel were seized.

The station also includes reports on recent military actions. At 0100 on 24 April in La Paz Department, guerrilla forces attacked Army troops in Mercedes La Ceiba. The guerrillas ambushed the reinforcement troops in San Antonio Canton, Santa Maria Ostuma. According to this report, 6 mines were set off on the path of the military truck. The FMLN claims that they inflicted 43 casualties on the Army, leaving 24 soldiers dead and 19 seriously injured.

Radio Venceremos states that at 0700 on 22 April, a guerrilla unit ambushed a military truck transporting troops belonging to the Bracamonte Battalion. The troops were ambushed near the 22-km marker between Olocuilta and Santo Tomas, La Paz Department. The Army sustained nine casualties.

Guatemala

Four EGP Rebels Reportedly Killed in Clash

PA2704020388 Guatemala City EL GRAFICO in Spanish 26 Apr 88 p 11

[Text] A communique issued last night by the Army's Information and Dissemination Department reports that four members of the Poor People's Guerrilla Army [EGP] were killed yesterday during a clash with a military patrol.

The communique adds that the clash occurred in Xejuyeu jurisdiction, approximately 8 km northwest of Amachel, Nebaj municipality, Quiche Department.

The information adds that the patrol members also seized some weapons and explosives.

Honduras

Government Protests EPS Foray Across Border

PA2604165688 Tegucigalpa Cadena Audio Video in Spanish 1130 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Report by Hernan Reyes Pineda]

[Text] Although it comes 10 days after incidents between Hondurans and Nicaraguans on the border, President Azcona's government has released the details on the armed conflict between military personnel of the two nations. A protest sent by the Foreign Ministry on behalf of the Honduran Government points to the deterioration of relations between the two countries. The Honduran

Government has expressed its feelings in a most vigorous protest over the EPS attack on the village of Suhi, located on the banks of the (Juan Coco Segovia) River in Gracias a Dios Department.

Approximately 65 EPS members attacked Suhi, opening fire indiscriminately in a military operation that resulted in the death of Samuel Toribio Miller, a soldier, and Eduardo Martinez, a civilian, and left several people wounded, all of them Hondurans, according to the Foreign Ministry note.

The protest note says: Mr Minister [not further identified], the Honduran Government has observed the course of the negotiations between your government and the Nicaraguan Resistance Directorate, with the conviction that national reconciliation and progress toward the democratization of your country would represent a valuable contribution to regional peace. However, your government's Army has continued its hostile actions toward the Honduran villages of (Aguas Vila), Tranca, and Rus Rus, in Gracias a Dios Department, this time harassing, staging provocations, and threatening to use violence.

This incessant harassment has taken place on 16, 18, and 22 April. My government presents its most vigorous protest over these actions, which are irreconciliable with the elementary principles of international law.

In one section of the protest note, the Honduran Government says: I hope that your government will consider these facts and readopt a position in line with the demands of this historic time. We are trying to resolve our differences with an eye to returning to normal interregional relations.

Government To Pay for Damage to U.S. Consulate
PA2704030788 San Pedro Sula EL TIEMPO in Spanish 26 Apr 88 p 16

[Text] Tegucigalpa—Press Secretary Lizandro Quesada announced yesterday that, in accordance with the Geneva Agreement regulations, the Honduran Government will pay for the damage caused to the U.S. Consulate during recent violent demonstrations.

According to Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, Honduras will have to pay $6 million to the United States. Quesada said: "If the two countries want to be just and fair over the amount to be paid for damages, the correct thing to do is for the two countries to make a joint appraisal of the damage."

The government spokesman explained that the Geneva Agreement specifies that "host countries must pay for damage caused to diplomatic facilities during riots and street demonstrations."

"Agreements must be fulfilled, and Honduras has to honor them," Quesada emphasized. He added that the Honduran Government has not asked the United States to pay for the damage, because it "would not be dignified to ask such a thing."

The press secretary did not say from which budget appropriation the government will take the 12 million lempiras needed to pay the United States. "I know that, according to the Geneva Agreement, Honduras has to pay for the damage," he said.

Church Distributing U.S.-Supplied Contra Aid
PA2604200288 Tegucigalpa Cadena Audio Video in Spanish 1130 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Auxiliary Archbishop of Tegucigalpa Msgr Oscar Rodriguez is the coordinator in Honduras of the U.S.-supplied humanitarian aid for the contras. On this topic, Msgr Hector Enrique Santos disclosed that as soon as it was learned that there was $17 million at stake, Honduran lay workers Marco Tulio Vanegas, Emilio Aguirre, and Cesar Zelaya rushed to offer their volunteer services.

Congress President Comments on Matta Case
PA2604152488 Tegucigalpa EL HERALDO in Spanish 25 Apr 88 p 3

[Text] San Pedro Sula—National Congress President Carlos Orbin Montoya said in San Pedro Sula over the weekend that the judicial branch should take action on its own, or at the request of the interested party, to prosecute the people who, violating the constitution of the Republic, participated in the kidnapping of alleged Honduran drug trafficker Ramon Matta del Pozzo.[as published]

"We received a report on the incident, and when people in Honduras learned about it, Mr Matta had already been captured in the Dominican Republic by DEA agents," Montoya said.

He said that when someone mutilates, steals, or kills someone it is a fait accompli. "Who reacts to a fait accompli?" Montoya asked. "The judicial branch should punish those who violate the laws."

He recalled that when the incident took place he termed it a kidnapping. Thus, he reiterated, the judicial branch should take action.

The National Congress president also mentioned the recent demonstrations, which he described as a "strange mix of conservative and left-wing [groups]," which together set the U.S. Consulate on fire and caused much damage.

Again, the Congress president asked: "Who finances these demonstrations? What is their goal? Why did conservative groups at the university help and join the ultra-leftwing and go to the U.S. Consulate to set it on fire with Molotov cocktails?"

Montoya added: "We are facing an escalation in drug trafficking and Honduras is the transit point. There is a lot of money at stake. There is also the arrogance of the North Americans who violate the dignity of our people, and there is also the incapacity of some police commanders who lower their heads and say yes to the arrogant U.S. policy."

"We do not like people to offend our dignity. We do not like the gringos' arrogance in Honduras. We do not like having the contras in our country, and we must protest all that, but we must also maintain the constitutional government of Jose Azcona," the political leader said.

Montoya added that Matta's kidnapping was distorted to humiliate Azcona's government and to make the Liberal Party appear as a weak party that does not know how to rule. "A vast propaganda campaign blew up the incident to make it seem bigger than it really was and really is," Montoya said.

Going back to the escalation in drug trafficking, Montoya said Honduran society should be cleansed of the danger represented by drug trafficking.

"Drug trafficking is a multimillion [dollar business] and it usually disrupts all structures in a poor country. Society can be corrupted, governments can be bribed, soldiers can be bribed, and the country can become a springboard."

As an example, Montoya mentioned the situation in Panama, where nothing is respected and where a legal government was deposed and a soldier boasts about the millions obtained from drug trafficking.

Montoya repeated his statements a few days ago in Tegucigalpa: "The nationalists who support Callejas have themselves speculated that Oswaldo's supporters were financed by the Colombian Carlos Luis 'Lucho' Guerrero, who was extradited to the United States. They said this movement was headquartered in San Pedro Sula in a building owned by the alleged drug trafficker."

Montoya also discussed the strange alliance between the United Front of Democratic University Students (FUUD) and left-wing fronts to set the U.S. Embassy on fire. Montoya said it is well known that Oswaldo Ramos Soto is the FUUD leader.

The Congress president made these statements Friday night during a political meeting with several of his followers in a San Pedro Sula neighborhood.

Nicaragua

Ortega on Extension of U.S. Economic Embargo

PA2704000388 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 2053 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Speech by President Daniel Ortega to the McGregor Irrigation Company workers in Managua on 26 April—recorded]

[Text] You and the other workers who make up this company are exerting yourselves to benefit Managua's population. You are all well aware of Managua's potable water supply problem. This problem is closely linked to the population explosion and to the past lack of interest in solutions to the demands for water in Managua and everywhere else in Nicaragua.

You are good Sandinists, workers, and men who have a proletarian and revolutionary awareness. You took up the challenge of completing this national task, and today we can assert that you have indeed fulfilled your task. This will certainly alleviate the water problem in Managua, but the problem is not resolved yet. This project will help strengthen the efforts to resolve the water problem. You all know that [words indistinct] the wells cannot supply all the water we need, but you have done your job.

Comrade [name indistinct] is here with us. He and his work teams must constantly exert themselves to supply the water needed for the basic industries and the population. We know the Somozists did not [words indistinct] electricity, which was taken for granted in the past, and the war has worsened everything. We want the INE [Nicaraguan Institute of Energy] to guarantee the electricity needed by the people, institutions, and hospitals [words indistinct].

Let me tell you: Your decision to work an average of 12 hours a day proves your level of proletarian awareness. You know perfectly well what a revolution means and what sacrifices a revolution demands. All revolutions must face a counterrevolution, and the United States is our counterrevolution. The United States has been waging a war against us all these years. Our country has problems affecting the very lives of the Nicaraguan people, not to mention the problems affecting our properties and production. There are other problems, but a society's most precious possession is the lives of its people: children, women, and men. These lives have been extinguished by Reagan and by the aggressive, terrorist U.S. policy. Our workers in the countryside are murdered by the counterrevolutionaries who are organized and financed by the United States.

You have achieved a goal, and you have proved that you are clearly aware of your responsibility, or else you would not have been able to complete your task. The basic thing is to fulfill your tasks, because this company, no matter how efficient it may be, does not have the necessary resources and opportunities available to a

company operating in a developed country that is not a war. You cannot compare a company operating in Nicaragua with a company operating in a European country or the United States, or with some companies operating in another Latin American country. They are not at war, so they have many resources, and their workers can work under better conditions than you do.

You have certainly fulfilled your task, and this water production has practically doubled our water reserves. This will benefit the people who live in Managua's neighborhoods, meaning poor, humble, and working people. The hospitals will be guaranteed a steady supply of water. This companies' workers have exerted themselves to the utmost for the revolution and have rendered a service to all the people and workers living in Managua.

Your political awareness is shared by 99 percent of the working class in Nicaragua and by 99 percent of the workers in the cities and the countryside. Otherwise, how can anyone explain that we have been able to withstand and defeat the Yankee aggression throughout these years? We have defeated it on the military, economic, production, and service fronts. A country at war—like the one imposed on us—may try to double its water supply, as we have done in Managua, but [words indistinct]. The people must have a revolutionary and proletarian awareness—the same awareness the organized peasants and workers need to carry out equally important tasks on every front.

We have been waging a war in every sector; the workers are exerting themselves in the military, production, health, services, agricultural, and cattle sectors. The workers are everywhere, and the Nicaraguan economy has not collapsed, even though Reagan has tried to undermine the Nicaraguan economy. Just today—while receiving this project on behalf of the Nicaraguan people; when [words indistinct] workers who completed this project—we hear that the U.S. Government, meaning President Reagan, yesterday issued a decree declaring a state of emergency because Nicaragua represents a danger, a threat, to U.S. security. This decree is aimed at renewing the economic boycott against Nicaragua on 1 May.

However, Reagan's economic boycott does not demoralize Nicaraguan workers, and we have the results here. This proves Nicaraguan workers are not demoralized, that the boycott has not weakened their (?will). The boycott has not (?achieved its goal). The workers' will and awareness is stronger than Reagan's criminal decision to extend the boycott. Our reply to the boycott is to increase the water supply to Managua's population. Our reply to the boycott is more work, productivity, and discipline on every front.

I want to mention an event that is tragic and painful, because there still are a certain minority of workers. When we arrived here today, we saw a small group of SNEM [National Service for Malaria Eradication] workers carrying signs that read: Stop the repression. They demanded this from the Sandinist government; they demanded this from the revolution. They were protesting against the FSLN. These poor workers—I say poor workers because you must realize that they have no political awareness.

Instead of standing around here and [words indistinct] I do not know how many hours, maybe all day; instead of engaging in these types of activities and protests against the revolution; and instead of adopting totally (?impossible) positions and accusing the government of repression, they should declare a hunger strike in front of the U.S. Embassy. The workers should be picketing in front of the U.S. Embassy, because no one can deny that Reagan and his criminal and terrorist policy have been implementing a repressive policy against the Nicaraguan people and workers, provoking all kinds of problems for Nicaragua's economy and killing the Nicaraguan people.

It is inconceivable how a minority group of dumb [brutos] worker—some of whom claim they are revolutionaries—do not know who the enemy is. They believe their enemy is here, that the revolution is their enemy, that the FSLN is their enemy, that the revolutionary government is their enemy. Apparently they are ignoring that yesterday Reagan declared a state of emergency concerning Nicaragua and that the United States—that world military power—has decreed a state of emergency because Nicaragua is a threat to its security. How ridiculous!

It does serve to justify its policy of embargo, terrorism, and aggression against the Nicaraguan workers. We also know there is collusion among the labor groups involved in counterrevolutionary activities. People who claim to be revolutionaries and those who are openly counterrevolutionary are involved in these activities. There are coincidences among the right-wing and self-proclaimed left-wing groups. The latter are more to the right than the right wing.

This person, this Yankee who works for Reagan, is an aggressive, mad person who has been suggesting an invasion against everyone. His last name is Abrams. His name is Elliott Abrams. This fellow just said at the Yankee Congress that [words indistinct] and all the opposition parties and all the left-wing parties [words indistinct] to be able to destroy the Sandinist regime.

The political leaders of these unions, some who say they are rightists and others who claim to be leftists, are in fact Abrams' guys. They are Abram's guys. It would not be surprising that while they send some workers to conduct actions that are shameful or send the workers there out into the streets, (?Abrams') children are receiving dollars every month from the U.S. Embassy. There is a difference. There is a difference between the latter and the true working class in this country, made up of workers with a conscience, revolutionary workers, and workers who know their sacrifices today will mean a better future for this country and people. These are

workers with a proletariat conscience, workers who understand that all revolutionary processes undergo difficult moments. There have been workers who have had to work while eating once a day because they were facing a counterrevolution. [28-second break for station identification]

These are the difficulties we must face when the counterrevolutionaries try to destroy a revolutionary process. With time, the counterrevolution will be defeated, and life will return to normal. The workers will then have a different and better standard of living. What were major problems before will become (?minor) problems. We are winning the battle with the imperialists without needing to resort to extreme measures. Production has been maintained despite the Yankee aggressive policies. Those policies have not succeeded in disrupting production.

Here we have an enterprise. The enterprise lacked the resources for [words indistinct]. Thanks to the workers' efforts, this enterprise was used to hold meetings and discussions. We, the revolutionaries, the Nicaraguan workers, the peasants, now continue to show that this process is irreversible—irreversible means never going back. This is irreversible. We will never turn back, never. Regardless of how much the Yankees may scream, regardless of how much the U.S. newspapers and radios may scream, regardless of how much the leaders of the political parties opposed to the revolution may scream, this process is irreversible.

The class consciousness that the Nicaraguan workers have acquired is real; it is true, it has been submitted to all tests. The Nicaraguan workers have been submitted to all tests in military combat against the contras and against imperialist aggression. They have been submitted to the test of economic combat and tasks, and of the productive tasks. As for the [words indistinct] to pick coffee in war zones. How many of them are at the forefront of the economy and production in the war zones? If the counterrevolutionaries ambush construction workers in a war zone, for example, and those workers die at the hands of the contras, other constructions workers come to occupy their places. If the contras kill health workers, other health workers take their places. If the contras kill workers in an agricultural project, other workers come to take their places. That shows the class awareness of Nicaraguan workers. The problem of awareness is the biggest problem of every revolution. [Words indistinct] changes in the process, and if the workers are capable of adopting this process with their own awareness. Then, logically, the process can collapse. [passage indistinct]

Awareness must be developed and must be reinforced every day. There are ideological and political clashes with the enemy every day. This is a deep revolution of the workers and peasants. This is a revolution of the workers that has ceded space to other sectors, space to other sectors [repeats himself]. However, the predominant interests—namely, the chief interests of this revolution—are those of the workers and peasants.

If we have to choose between sacrificing the interests of workers and peasants and the interests of the bourgeoise and of the rich in this country, it is logical that the bourgeoise would disappear first. Those who had it easy would disappear, but the proletariat, peasants, and workers cannot disappear. Those are the interests that will be defended to the end by this revolutionary process.

In the end, consciousness has become the main way to defend the revolution. There is popular consciousness, because everyone now claims to care for the workers. You will read in right-wing newspapers, you will hear on right-wing radio stations, and you will hear speeches by right-wing leaders, bourgeoise leaders, and COSEP [Higher Council of Private Enterprise] leaders that they are now showing great concern for the workers. They claim to be very concerned about the workers and peasants because the revolution is finishing them, because the revolution is killing them with hunger, because the revolution is not meeting the peasants' demands, and because the revolution is repressing workers and peasants.

Since when have the capitalists, the bourgeoise, and the imperialists shown concern for the workers? They are showing concern now [words indistinct]. We know this is not genuine concern; it is a concern aiming to weaken the class consciousness of Nicaraguan workers [words indistinct] that the revolution is not meeting their demands and that we were better off before, because they do not want to [words indistinct] with their speeches.

If you look into a speech of a right-wing party [words indistinct] reach the conclusion that we were better off before. If we were better off before [words indistinct]. Capitalists were better off before [words indistinct] to repress the workers [words indistinct] and to exploit the workers.

That is why I asked: Were we better off before? Of course, they were better off before. But today, despite all the difficulties in this country, the workers are better off now because [words indistinct]. The peasants were repressed in the past by the guardsmen. Peasants had no land or had their land stolen by large landowners with the support of the guardsmen who repressed peasants. They cannot be worse off now. Peasants are now better off despite all the difficulties [words indistinct], but they are not worse off than before.

If they are facing great difficulties, it is because of the aggression and repression against Nicaragua by the Yankee government [words indistinct]. The Yankee government represents capitalist interests. The Yankee wants to impose politics [words indistinct] the past of Somoza times. The Yankee government is applying an embargo.

In fact, yesterday [words indistinct] Reagan sent a bill to Congress stating that [words indistinct] of the state of emergency in the face of the threat posed by Nicaragua to U.S. security. Imagine the subterfuges to which Reagan has to resort to justify an absurd, terrorist policy. [passage indistinct]

I repeat, a worker does not always turn out to be a revolutionary just because he is a worker. He becomes revolutionary as he starts clearly seeing what our economic realities are; as he gradually values his own role in society; as he realizes he is fundamental in the resolution of the country's problems; as he realizes it is necessary to defend the country's sovereignty and self-determination. That is the (?integral) proletariat consciousness. [Words indistinct] working forces that are defending Nicaragua.

These forces of workers and peasants have been resisting the Yankee aggression for 7 years. You are part of this effort. Comrades, as part of the effort, [words indistinct] this morning, having fulfilled this task in exemplary fashion by working an average of 8 [as heard] hours per day [words indistinct] on behalf of all workers of Nicaragua; on behalf of the Sandinist [words indistinct] of national liberation and of all Sandinist institutions; on behalf of the fighters of our Army [words indistinct]; on behalf of peasants who are in war zones; and on behalf of people of [words indistinct].

Free fatherland! [crowd shouts: "Or death!"]

Tinoco Meets With Contras in Miami 25 April

PA2604130888 Buenos Aires REUTER in Spanish 0538 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Miami, 25 Apr—Nicaraguan contra spokesmen have reported that Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Tinoco held an unannounced meeting with counterrevolutionary leaders today to arrange for a new round of peace talks, which are expected to be held this week in Managua.

Jorge Rosales, the rebel spokesman, said that Tinoco met with Roberto Ferrey, chief of the contra negotiating team. This meeting is regarded as the first negotiations to be held between contra and Nicaraguan Government representatives in the United States. Two other contra leaders were present at the meeting.

The discussions basically dealt with the support the Managua talks will receive.

Tinoco has played a key role in the efforts to negotiate a permanent cease-fire in Nicaragua's civil war.

RN's Bermudez Denies Internal Division Rumors

PA2604143788 Managua Radio Corporacion in Spanish 0400 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Interview with Nicaraguan Resistance, RN, Army Commander in Chief Enrique Bermudez by reporter Rafael Mojica in Miami, Florida; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Bermudez] The Sandinists have launched a misinformation campaign to undermine the morale and unity of our organization. The rumors about a division within the organization's political and military leadership are false. The political leadership has full backing from the rest of the organization. We are united. We understand that, at this moment, unity is the most important factor to enable us to face the Sandinist misinformation machinery. I am officially denying all rumors in this regard.

[Mojica] Commander Bermudez, are the military and political leaders of the Nicaraguan Resistance in favor of continuing the dialogue with the Sandinist regime despite Daniel Ortega's statement in Managua that he wants to begin a dialogue with the United States?

[Bermudez] We are prepared to talk. We are prepared to do anything as long as the Sandinists democratize Nicaragua. Our struggle is against the totalitarian system that the Sandinists want to consolidate. So far, the Sandinists have not complied with any agreement, neither the Esquipulas nor the OAS commitments, nor the commitment of the five Central American presidents, nor the Sapoa agreements.

We have no reason to trust them and to surrender ourselves in exchange for a promise, which is what the Sandinists want us to do. I want to tell the Nicaraguan people and the freedom fighters once more that our weapons are the guarantee of democracy in Nicaragua, and our weapons will not be put down before a democratization process takes place in Nicaragua.

Opposition Parties Withdraw From Dialogue

PA2604202988 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1950 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] This morning the representatives of the 14 opposition political parties and organizations participating in the national dialogue arrived at the Cesar Augusto Silva convention center solely to announce that they are withdrawing from the dialogue until the government resolves the strike of the construction workers and auto mechanics. Disregarding the efforts carried out by the Labor Ministry to make the strikers listen to reason, Erick Ramirez, representative of the Social Christian Party, blamed the government for the current labor situation. Regarding the possible participation of political and trade union leaders in a hunger strike, Ramirez said that this is being seriously studied.

[Begin recording] [Ramirez] There have even been quite unfortunate statements by Commander [Carlos] Nunez regarding the workers' strike. Therefore, in a frankly irresponsible way, the government is pushing the workers to a very dangerous situation.

[Reporter] What was the reaction of Commander Nunez when you announced your decision?

[Ramirez] None. (?He) remained silent.

[Reporter] Will you as leaders also join the workers' hunger strike?

[Ramirez] That is what we will discuss with the striking workers at this time.

[Reporter] In view of the fact that you already made a definite decision, does this have to be discussed?

[Ramirez] This movement is essentially organized and led by the workers, so we think that any participation by political leaders must result from consultations with them.

[Reporter] Do you agree that the union leaders who are directing the rank and file workers' hunger strike should also join it?

[Ramirez] We understand that this is so. Workers of various sectors are already participating in this movement, which we believe is very just and which is based on fundamental demands by the workers.

[Reporter] I ask the question because at this time no trade union leader has joined the hunger strike.

[Ramirez] Well, we can discuss this with them to see what decision will be made.

[Reporter] So what is the proposal to the government regarding the labor problem?

[Ramirez] That it be resolved as soon as possible according to the commitment made by the government on 21 March with the eight political parties. [end recording]

Opposition Parties on Reports on U.S. Financing

PA2604203888 Managua Sistema Sandinista Television Network in Spanish 0200 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Excerpts] Today the opposition parties that the United States considers its allies in Nicaragua denied they know anything about being on a list to receive financing from the Reagan administration to promote activities aimed at overthrowing the Nicaraguan Government.

Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, has said the United States is counting on the opposition political parties to overthrow the Nicaraguan Government.

[Speaker] "This whimsical statement by this gringo about providing aid obviously (?affects) all of Nicaragua's political parties, even those of the left. He even mentioned them first. He mentioned those of the left, the right, the center, in short, everyone, because he is interested in [words indistinct] Nicaragua. We of the Socialist Party are concerned about this boasting by Reagan's front man."

Members of the PLI [Independent Liberal Party] said they are not on Abrams' list.

[Speaker] "(?We) have never received any type of aid from the U.S. Government. Therefore, the same would be true now. We would not receive aid from any U.S. agency."

The Conservatives do not as of yet know who will receive or how much they will obtain from Abrams' aid.

[Speaker] "We do not want to comment on something about which so far we have no knowledge. We do not know anything about the plan or the proposed aid. We do not know anything about it. I do not like to comment on something about which I really have no knowledge."

The Socialists do not want the aid that the United States is offering.

[Speaker] "We emphatically reject this (?offer) from that North American. It is up to the other parties that are generally involved [words indistinct]."

The PLI was not surprised by the offer but by the objective disclosed by Abrams.

[Speaker] "I would say that is an exaggeration. Abrams was exaggerating when he said that this aid is to overthrow Sandinism."

Miriam Arguello [of the Conservative Party] would accept the aid if it is in line with the objectives of her party:

[Arguello] "When someone offers us something, we do not accept conditions. Logically, the objective of an opposition party is to obtain power, and to obtain power one has to remove the one in power." [passage omitted]

Many parties say they do not receive money, but Arguello criticized them:

[Arguello] "Perhaps the only political organization that does not receive financing from abroad is the Nicaraguan Conservative Party. All the other political organizations receive foreign financing; that is, from the Christian Democratic International, the Liberal International, and the Socialist International. All of those international organizations help the political organizations in one way or another."

Panama

Military Forces Occupy Opposition Offices

PA2604193688 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1719 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Panama City, 26 Apr (ACAN-EFE)—The headquarters of two labor organizations that belong to the opposition National Civic Crusade [CCN] were occupied during the past few hours by military forces who prevented access to them, reliable sources of the organizations have announced.

The Panamanian Association of Odontologists and the Association of Panamanian Industrialists (SIP) headquarters were occupied. Both organizations are part of the CCN, which has been demanding the resignation of General Manuel Antonio Noriega as commander of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] for the last 10 months.

Edgardo Sagel, secretary general of the National Medical Association, said Army Intelligence Service agents occupied the Association of Odontologists offices this morning. Sagel termed the occupation a "barbaric act."

He added that, according to eyewitness reports, six plainclothesmen broke into the Association of Odontologists offices and seized files, typewriters, and various office supplies.

Sagel said the district attorney's office denied ordering a raid on that association, while Army Intelligence officials said "the action was in accordance with the country's security."

Sagel said this action reflects the "repressive tactics" being used against the Panamanian people, and that the president of this organization, Juan Ramon Morales, is hiding for fear of reprisals being taken against him.

The SIP offices on the Panama City outskirts were also occupied by FDP forces last night at 2200 (0300 GMT) although no arrests were made at the time, a spokesman for the organization who chose to remain anonymous told ACAN-EFE.

The source added that SIP leaders have taken precautionary measures in the wake of the incident.

The CCN, which consists of 200 professional, teacher, and civic organizations, has called on supporters to join Thursday's demonstration in this capital "against Gen Noriega and the communism of the military regime."

Additional Banking Services Authorized

PA2604190988 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 26 Apr 88 pp 1, 2

[Communique issued by the Panamanian Banking Commission in Panama City on 25 April]

[Text] National Banking Commission

Closed-Door Banking Reactivation

(Second Phase: Loan Portfolios, Foreign Trade, Trusts, and Exchange Market)

Effective yesterday [as published], Monday, 25 April, official banks and other banks established in Panama are authorized to resume operations involving letters of credit, collections, orders of payment, foreign currency transactions, and other operations, always within the special conditions established in Agreement No 8-88 of 28 March 1988. It will be recalled that said agreement established temporary restrictions on checking account balances as of 3 March. Under those restrictions, only 25 percent of such balances—to a maximum of 10,000 balboas—is available for the use of the account holder.

The commission's new agreement, No 20-88 of 21 April 1988, is an important and decisive step in the gradual and orderly process being carried out by the commission to reestablish the regular functions of the banking system. Under that new agreement, the resumption of twelve (12) additional operations has been authorized.

1. receipt of payments of all kinds and by any means;

2. payment of customs liquidations on their own account or for third parties;

3. payments of Panama Canal tolls and payments to the accounts of the National Port Authority and the Civil Aeronautics Directorate;

4. local transfers;

5. receipt of judicial and extrajudicial payments;

6. purchase, sale, and exchange of coins, foreign exchange and metals;

7. letters of credit;

8. receipt of payments for documents [cobranzas documentarias] or for other services;

9. execution of orders of payment received;

10. trust accounts;

11. documentation and redocumentation of operations that do not involve disbursements by the bank other than incidental expenses. [no number 12 as published]

The new authorizations will permit borrowers to bring their payments up to date and will allow banks to keep their loan portfolios in order, an indispensable step in the resumption of credit operations in the near future.

Foreign trade in general, and the Colon Free Zone in particular, will benefit from the new agreement, since it authorizes a number of operations that are vital to those activities, such as letters of credit, collection of payments for documents, and collections for other services.

The purchase, sale, and exchange of foreign currency is also authorized by the new agreement, thereby promoting the reactivation of the exchange market.

Trust transactions and judicial and extrajudicial collections by the banks will resume thanks to the new authorizations by the commission. Also authorized are the usual facilities for payment through the official and other banks of Panama Canal tolls, and payments for services extended by the National Port Authority, the Civil Aeronautics Directorate, the IRHE [Institute of Hydraulic Resources and Electrification], INTEL [National Telecommunications Institute] and IDAAN [National Institute of Aqueducts and Sewers].

The commission's new measures do not yet authorize "over the counter" withdrawals of cash deposited in bank accounts, or access by the public in general to banking establishments. The reopening of doors and the resumption of complete services to the public in general has not yet been authorized. That is why access to bank doors remains restricted and subject to the measures that each bank may consider advisable to allow its clients to carry out the operations that are being resumed gradually and in an orderly manner. As each phase of reactivation that the commission orders is carried out as scheduled, and with the understanding and cooperation of the banking system and the commmunity in general, new operations will be authorized in a gradual and orderly manner until all the regular functions of the banks have been reestablished.

National Banking Commission

Panama City, 25 April 1988

Commentary on U.S. Embassy Electricity Cut Off

PA2604154788 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1350 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Commentary by Zelideth Maritza Rosales]

[Text] It has been reported that the U.S. Embassy is going to transfer its personnel to hotels because electricity services to them have been cut off. I believe this was the fair thing to do because if we [Panamanians] have our electricity cut off for nonpayment of very small bills over a period of 2-3 months—because some of us are forgetful about paying these bills and others have no way of paying them—then I believe that whoever else fails to comply with his obligations toward the state for services provided should have his electricity cut off.

[U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Terrence H.] Kneebone has said that they [the U.S. Embassy] were expecting the cut in service because they are not paying their bills. Since they follow instructions from Reagan—who apparently believes that Panama is an appendage of the United States—and Reagan has ordered that nothing be paid to Panama, that no business in Panama should comply with commitments made to the state when they filed for business operations in Panama—and one of these commitments is the payment of taxes—then the government, a free and independent government, must adopt the necessary decisions and apply the penalty that the law specifies for companies and consortiums that do not comply with the law.

The United States has nonchalantly issued the order not to pay a thing to Panama. There are rules that must be complied with regardless of whether those rules are liked or not. The [Panamanian] Government has adopted this decision regarding the North Americans for acting as deadbeats. I think this is what should happen to all U.S. businesses operating here who are following U.S. Government instructions. Panama is a free country. We are not an annexed state, a U.S. state, or a U.S. appendage, and much less are we a part of the U.S. backyard.

Archbishop McGrath on U.S. Sanctions, Crisis

PA2604153988 Panama City Telemetro Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Interview with Archbishop Marcos Gregorio McGrath by unidentified reporter in Panama City; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Panamanian Archbishop Marcos Gregorio McGrath has said that to resolve the country's crisis there must be an urgent dialogue.

[McGrath] Thank you for this interview. The 11 Panamanian Catholic bishops made a statement, which we called a pastoral message. Several bishops requested a meeting because of the new situation we are experiencing now that the crisis has become prolonged. At the beginning of this message we described the new situation. It is a pathetic situation. It is a slow agony in a country whose economy is quickly deteriorating. It is a catastrophe. The homeland is sort of dying and the crisis brings all kinds of personal and social consequences.

We met to express our concern and alarm in view of the situation. We believe Panamanians cannot sit back and do nothing and remain indifferent. We must all be concerned about the problem.

We began analyzing what the church has done and is doing to help the hungry, especially through Caritas and the campaigns of solidarity through prayers, which we conducted during Lent and Holy Week. We then discussed the causes of the problem. Some of them appeared a long time ago; for example, the economic system, which does not adequately distribute benefits among the country's large needy sectors. This system must be revised and new economic models must be introduced.

There are also problems such as the country's increasing militarism and widespread corruption in the public and private sectors. We subsequently discussed the most recent causes of the crisis. Evidently the most recent cause of the problem is politics. Politics has deeply divided this nation since 1984. This division increased during last June's incidents and it became stronger when President Delvalle tried to remove General [Noriega] from his position last January [as heard].

We stated that this cause is clearly seen as two types of oppression. We are experiencing internal oppression. We described the current government as a de facto military dictatorship, which acts through civilian sectors, while controlling these civilian sectors and the entire government. That leads to the systematic suspension of certain human rights, especially freedom of speech, press, and assembly.

We also talked about another form of oppression: The result of the economic sanctions imposed on us. We believe the economic problem will not be resolved by lifting the sanctions, because that problem is basically caused by a lack of trust in our country due to the political situation. Please let me read this paragraph: As a church and as Panamanians, we reject U.S. sanctions because they violate national sovereignty. We then added: We believe that because of the dependent nature of our economy, any political pressure is a threat to our people's life.

We must think about that very carefully. Large and small countries often impose economic sanctions on each other sometimes to protect themselves. This is a normal procedure, although sometimes they go to far. Those sanctions are usually part of a political or economic strategy. However, when the sanctions reach such a point that, as we stated in our message, they seriously threaten people's lives, then they go beyond what one can term an acceptable policy and instead become immoral. This is why we ask, we urge, that these sanctions be lifted. At the same time, and this is the other side of the coin, we also ask that measures be adopted to end the internal oppression. We ask that efforts be made to achieve—in a phrase that is very common today—a national reconciliation government and that the sectors agree to jointly find a solution. We conclude with this, insisting that an effective dialogue is urgently needed. We insist on a dialogue on these points that must be urgently resolved because there is no time. In 2 or 3 weeks, there will be chaos in this country. We must hurry and find a solution to help all Panamanians. We also call for another type of national dialogue that would be more long-term, a national reconciliation government, preparations for elections, and everything that would bring about a new future.

We conclude by issuing a call to our Christian brothers and peoples to be concerned about us and to pressure with their prayers, goodwill, and efforts so this situation of external and internal oppression of the Panamanian people will be resolved. We end with a prayer for solidarity with the Panamanian people from all other peoples.

[Reporter] The document points to the apathy and inability of the opposing forces to sit down and negotiate and it calls for a broad and effective national dialogue.

[McGrath] Yes, to some extent we have felt this because a group of presidents and former presidents proposed that I be a mediator. As the message states, I am willing to act as such but if others can better play this role, they should do so. The important thing is that with or without mediation there must be a meeting between both sides. We must be aware that this is urgently needed. They should sit down and talk. We know that talks are currently being held but they are not really the binding or effective talks that the nation requires. No Panamanian can refuse to participate at this time

[Reporter] Do you mean talks between the opposition and Gen Noriega?

[McGrath] Between the opposition and the government; However, with much reason, the opposition says—in a stance with which we agree and which we have been told by the government it also accepts—that any talk with the government must not only be with civilians but also with the general or with military men who really represent him with decisionmaking power.

[Reporter] It has been reported that [Papal Nuncio] Msgr Sebastian Laboa could be appointed by Pope John Paul II to mediate this crisis. Your comment?

[McGrath] That is a report that the nuncio has called groundless. He has wanted to help the dialogue and is in constant contact with us. Because of his high authority and because he is greatly accepted, at some point he could help but that report is groundless. It was rumor that became news.

[Reporter] Do you think the government is interested in resolving the national crisis? Do you think your message might reach high-ranking circles so there will be immediate action?

[McGrath] Well, we can confirm that it has already reached high-ranking circles and that attention is being given to this pastoral message. I do not think the government is monolithic. There are various positions in the

government. I think there are civilians and military men who realize that the dialogue is urgently needed and who are willing to hold one. This does not make the dialogue any easier but it must be begun by establishing the points to be discussed. When one says a dialogue will be held without preconditions, that is fine if it is understood that one is not deciding beforehand what one is going to abolish. However, prior to the dialogue one must establish what one is going to discuss. One must have an agenda. That is what we have tried to establish in contacts with opposition groups and the government. We think that an agenda is beginning to take shape. It would probably include everything dealing with Gen Noriega and his, and perhaps others', honorable departure: the dates, how, when, etc. It would also include everything that affects the political situation after this happens, what many have called a national reconciliation government, and, finally, a vision for the future: preparing for elections. All of this would not have to be discussed right away because that has to be left for later because one must not hold a dialogue that will take weeks and months. One must agree on some points quickly in order to alleviate the Panamanian people's current situation.

[Reporter] What have the Catholic Church observers to the dialogue being held by the members of the People's Unity Front been able to observe at the negotiating table? Will they really be able to resolve the national crisis?

[McGrath] There are two problems. I think any dialogue is useful, and from that dialogue things will emerge that might be useful at other forums. The problem is that this dialogue includes only one political position. That is why many groups, even many popular groups, have said they will not participate in a dialogue...[recording abruptly ends]

FUP Recommends Suing U.S. at The Hague

PA2604192488 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] The national dialogue continues at the Atlapa Convention Center. Reporter John Jairo Posada Castano interviewed Alvaro Munoz, FUP [People's Unity Front] spokesman, who said the following on the new suggestions being made to the executive branch:

[Begin Munoz recording] First of all, it is recommended that the executive study, in the medium- and long-term, propose the establishment of a new monetary system; in other words, the feasibility of a new monetary system to resolve in the medium- or long-term the currency problem, so the U.S. Government will not be able to cut Panama's jugular again because it controls the Panamanian currency.

We also approved recommending that the national government sue the U.S. Government at the International Court of Justice at The Hague for damage to the Panamanian economy and society. [end recording]

Those were remarks by FUP spokesman Alvaro Munoz to the national and foreign media about the conclusions reached in the last few hours by the participants at the national dialogue. Here is another excerpt of his remarks:

[Begin Munoz recording] We also agreed to recommend that the executive branch use the appropriate measures to inform the national and international community about the estimated daily losses in dollars as a result of the U.S. Government's economic blockade. This must be done through the national and international communications media and the Panamanian diplomatic service. [end recording]

Meanwhile, Hector Aleman, secretary general of the National Federation of Association of Public Employees, FENASEP, told Radio Nacional [Domestic Service] that the changes in the Solis Palma administration do not mean that the national dialogue should come to an end.

Government Continues Administration Shakeup

PA2604171388 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 26 Apr 88 pp 1, 2

[Text] Darien Ayala and Jaime Simons have assumed their respective offices during a ceremony at the office of Presidency Minister Nander Pitty Velasquez.

Ayala was appointed technical director of the General Directorate of Community Development by Decree no 35 dated 25 April 1988 and Simons as general manager of the National Savings Bank by Decree No 36 of the same date. The decrees were signed by President Solis and Presidency Minister Pitty.

The executive branch has made other appointments, as follows:

Juan Bosco Bernal	deputy education minister
Luis Olmedo Castillo	deputy agricultural and livestock development minister
Julio Harris	deputy finance and treasury minister
Ilka Viejo	general director, Social Security Fund
Carlos Estrada	general director, Price Control Office
Rodolfo Barraza	general director, Institute of Hydroelectric Resources and Electrification
Ariel Herrera	general director, National Institute for Professional Training
Alberto Luis Tunon	general director, Bayano Cement Plant
Cesar Montenegro	general director, Institute of Natural Renewable Resources
Ricardo Diaz	general manager, National Bingos
Roberto Barragan	general manager, President Remon Racetrack
Didio Carrizo	general director, Agricultural and Livestock Marketing Institute

Alfredo Machara-viaya	general manager, Agricultural and Livestock Development Bank
Marta Amado	general manager, National Mortgage Bank
Ramon Pereira	governor, Panama Province
Daniel Nieto	director, La Victoria Sugar Corporation
Bernardo Dominguez	general director, Panamanian Tourism Institute
Sara S. Carrion	assistant director, National Sports Institute
Alejandro Vernaza	assistant director, La Victoria Sugar Corporation
Mayda Arango	assistant administrative and finance manager, Panamanian Tourism Institute
Lidia Martinez	assistant general director, National Beneficent Lottery
Alberto Velasquez	assistant administrative director, Civil Aeronautics Directorate
Teodoro Navas	assistant administrative director, Social Security Fund

Editorial Analyzes 'War Cabinet' Choices

PA2604230288 Panama City MATUTINO in Spanish 26 Apr 88 p 4

[Editorial: "The War Cabinet"]

[Excerpts] Following a brief period of suspense, Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, announced his new team of ministers Sunday night. The most varied reactions were heard immediately. Many people felt that there are many well-known names in the Cabinet that are not considered an adequate fulfillment of the president's announcement that he would designate a War Cabinet.

This attitude, a rejection by those who are not satisfied that those on this team can collectively be called a War Cabinet, probably means that those who think this way had been expecting the president to choose those who are militarily qualified or are at least recognized warmongers. They wanted a cabinet of unruly, violent extremists willing to risk their lives and those of the people at the first opportunity by exchanging bullets and corpses with the illegal forces sent to our soil by the Reagan administration.

The group that now accompanies Solis Palma in the difficult task of firmly managing Panama in the current reality—slowly but surely, short- and long-term so policies can be determined—does not meet those mistaken expectations. The truth is, just as the president explained, that the criterion he used in selecting the new group was the need for surrounding himself with aides who can offer immediate and appropriate solutions to the problems the country faces. This does diminish the merit and accomplishments of those replaced in the Cabinet.

We believe the War Cabinet reflects the president's wish to wage war on hunger and inequality. The War Cabinet will be permanently dedicated, without hesitation or delays, to the task of offering the people the answers that they have been demanding for a long time and that are now desperately needed. [passage omitted]

This type of determination would change all of Panama, its people, its land, its seas, its rivers, and even its skies into a country at war led by a War Cabinet. It would be a war to achieve peace and progress that we would win without delay or doubt.

Construction Industry Seriously Affected by Crisis

PA2704034488 Panama City Telemetro Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Alberto Aleman III, president of the Panamanian Chamber of Construction [CAPAC], has reported that the construction industry has noticeably decreased in the first 3 months of the year. He emphasized some construction projects have been temporarily halted, thus affecting employment.

[Begin recording] [Aleman] CAPAC has been closely following the behavior of the industry, and the statistics disclose the crisis is grave. In the 1st 3 months of this year, construction has noticeably decreased. This was quite evident in March when construction permits requested through the municipal engineers' offices in Panama City and San Miguelito districts only amounted to .5 million balboas, compared to last year when these permits amounted to 11.5 million balboas. In other words, there is a noticeable decrease. Of the new permits requested in the amount of $.5 million [1 balboa equals $1], there was only one new construction project, amounting to $171,000. It was a service station. This reflects the seriousness of the crisis in the industry.

This has been the worst month since 1976, the year when CAPAC began to gather these statistics. In March 1976, which was another bad month, new permits totalling $1.2 million were granted—in other words, this has been the worse year in the last 12 years.

[Reporter] Does this mean activities in the construction industry are in danger of disappearing if there is not a prompt political solution in the country?

[Aleman] The construction industry will not disappear; it will remain. Countries must continue building; one must continue building. However, there is a serious decline right now in the industry, and there is a serious threat to the existing construction companies. We are also worried about the high unemployment rate that will result. In the construction industry, we were growing in

this local economic system. We were growing at a very accelerated rate, and we are practically at a standstill now because of the political and financial problems we are facing. As I said earlier, the construction industry employed 46,000 workers as of August last year. We presently have a high rate of unemployment, as constructions are temporarily at a standstill. This worries us because as long as the political crisis continues and if it is not solved quickly by the Panamanians, we will continue to suffer the consequences we are experiencing. [end recording]

Trade Minister on Economic Priorities

FL2604192588 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Interview with Mario Rognoni, minister of trade and industries, by Nelson Notario Castro, special Cuban television correspondent, in Panama City; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Notario Castro] In the national dialogue taking place at the Atlapa Convention Center in Panama City, a request has been made for a moratorium on the country's foreign debt payments so that those resources can be invested in Panama's development. We are interviewing Eng Mario Rognoni, minister of trade and industries of Panama, for his views as to the possibility that this request may become a reality. Mr Rognoni, what are the prospects of a moratorium?

[Rognoni] The economic deterioration the Republic has suffered as a result of the American aggression places us in a delicate position in how to use the funds available. However, it is evident that the supply of foodstuffs and basic items will be our priority so as to go on with our economic development. It is preferable to devote our efforts to obtain supplies than to pay off our debts. Therefore, I believe that the members of the international community that have granted credits to Panama will understand that we are in no position right now to pay interest or capital.

[Notario Castro] What do you think these economic resources could be directly used for? We know these resources are to be used to solve urgent needs of the national economy, but what are the specific items?

[Rognoni] We are giving priority to medicine and food, both finished products and materials for their manufacture or for the development of the food industry.

[Notario Castro] As minister of trade and industries, how can the consumption habits created over the years by the producers be quickly changed?

[Rognoni] These people have really been big consumers, especially in the metropolitan area, under the influence of the former Canal Zone and the American presence in the middle of the city. However, I think that the great majority of Panamanians residing in the rural areas have retained a producers mentality. We believe that the need created by the crisis will force the metropolitan Panamanian to rethink his lifestyle and will turn the country into a true production center.

[Notario Castro] We have learned that the government, through the Ministry of Agricultural-Livestock Development, plans to produce everything locally. In other words, it plans to not import anything that can be produced here.

[Rognoni] That is the policy right now: to produce what we need and consume what the country produces to try to avoid the flight of foreign exchange, which is so scarce now, on luxury items or items that are not essential to the basic maintenance of our economy and of our people. However, it is going to be an educational process; it is going to take time. But, the gravity of the crisis is going to help us a great deal.

[Notario Castro] How can national agricultural production be encouraged, since one needs to spend money to produce more and the banks are still not operating fully?

[Rognoni] We have managed to make the banks aware of the problem and to get them to start working on procedures and mechanisms that might make agricultural development a priority. Moreover, state subsidies and assistance are being activated and the elimination of red tape that often delays agricultural development speeded up. We believe that the effort to face the crisis undertaken with all the human capacity we can summon is going to help us overcome this problem.

Report on UN Nonaligned Discussion on Panama

PA2604220288 [Editorial Report] Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish at 2330 GMT on 24 April broadcasts a 27-minute "special program" on an emergency meeting of the Nonaligned Movement Coordinating Bureau held at UN headquarters on 15 April to discuss the "growing political and economic pressure and threats of military aggression to which Panama is being subjected by the U.S. Government." The report contains recorded excerpts of some of the speeches made during the session.

Dr Jorge Eduardo Ritter, Panama's permanent representative to the United Nations, says Panama has once again come before the organization "to seek solidarity, support, and advice" at this time of crisis. He charges that in deciding to take punitive measures against Panama, the U.S. Government is moved by the desire to "maintain control over the strategic position of the Isthmus of Panama and to perpetuate its military presence on Panamanian territory." This, he said, explains the "9 months of continuous aggression, intimidation, economic pressure, and military threats" to which Panama has been subjected, an effort "planned, coordinated, and supervised by the National Security Planning Group, which operates from the White House." Ritter

maintains that the U.S. measures against Panama are in violation of the UN and OAS Charters, of many resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly and other international organizations, and of the Nonaligned Movement's basic principles. He says SELA discussed this situation in late March and approved a resolution rejecting the "coercive economic measures" taken by the U.S. Government and urging that government to immediately revoke those measures. Instead, he says, the United States increased its pressure. Ritter dismisses the idea that Panama could pose a threat to U.S. security. He says: "That is a big lie surpassed only by the aggression it produced."

Ritter says that although the United States, "without motive or authorization," has launched a "massive" display of military power "with the obvious intention of intimidating the Panamanian people," the Panama Defense Forces have acted with prudence and professionalism and have continued to carry out their duty of defending the canal. He says "the political parties of both the government and the opposition, the labor unions, the students, the peasants, and the professionals" have emphatically rejected U.S. intervention. He calls for Panamanians to be allowed to carry out a dialogue to resolve their problems.

Juan Salazar, Ecuador's permanent representative to the United Nations, says: "Ecuador has rejected the imposition of coercive economic measures against Panama and has urged that they be revoked immediately. At the same time, it has expressed hope that a completely democratic system will prevail in that country." He points out that all forms of intervention have been universally repudiated by the community of nations.

Peruvian Ambassador Carlos Alzamora describes the U.S. measures as a "serious threat to the international juridical system, which is, for all of us, a guarantee of our survival as sovereign, independent countries." He calls for SELA to defend the Panamanian people's right to self-determination and nonintervention, "basic principles of nonalignment."

Marcelo Delpech, Argentina's permanent representative to the United Nations, expresses his government's concern over the "coercive measures" taken against Panama. He says the Argentine Government is calling for the revocation of the economic measures and full compliance with the 1977 Panama Canal treaties. He adds: "We note with pleasure the terms of Article 6 of the SELA decision, which noted the Panamanian Government's pledge to act firmly to consolidate its democratic system."

Oscar Oramas, Cuba's representative to the United Nations, says the United States has violated the basic principles of international law and Panama's sovereignty and has unleashed a smear campaign against Panamanian authorities. Oramas adds: "The United States has no right whatsoever to strangle one of the countries in our region just because that country does not follow Washington's dictates." He notes: "The dignity and patriotism of Torrijos' countrymen will provide an example and a reflection of our America's commitment to independence."

Ernesto Rodriguez, Colombia's representative to the United Nations, reiterates his government's support for the principles of self-determination and nonintervention, particularly in this case, given the many historical, cultural, and ethnic ties linking Colombia with Panama. Rodriguez says Colombia rejects all "coercive" economic measures taken against Panama, since such measures "clearly violate the fundamental principles of international law, which reject all forms of external pressure, aggression, or threat to nations' sovereignty. We urge that these pressures be revoked." He also calls for strict compliance with the 1977 canal treaties, since this, he says, "is not just a Panamanian aspiration, but the aspiration of the entire Nonaligned Movement."

Hugo Navajas, Bolivia's permanent representative to the United Nations, also expresses his country's rejection of the "interference in the internal affairs of a free and sovereign country." He calls for the Panamanians to resolve their conflict by themselves.

Pak Kil-yon, DPRK permanent representative to the United Nations, expresses his government's "full support and solidarity with the Panamanian people and government in their struggle to defend their nation's security and independence." He says the U.S. economic sanctions are a "flagrant violation" of Panama's sovereignty.

Julio Icaza, Nicaragua's permanent representative to the United Nations, reaffirms his country's solidarity with Panama. Condemning the U.S. "aggression, which has reached very dangerous levels in the past few weeks," he says what is happening in Panama affects principles cherished by Latin America and the Nonaligned Movement. He adds: "Nicaragua, which has had firsthand experience of barefaced foreign intervention, can do no less than be at the side of Panama and its people in their struggle for national dignity and self-determination."

The Lao permanent representative to the United Nations expresses his government's support for Panama, saying his country is opposed to the use of "any kind of economic pressure as a means of exerting political pressure." He extends the full support of the Lao people and government to the Panamanian people.

The report states that at the end of the meeting the Nonaligned Movement approved a resolution repudiating "the imposition of economic coercion against Panama by the U.S. Government."

WPC Mission Meets Solis Palma, Supports Panama

PA2604200688 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 26 Apr 88 pp A-1, A-2

[Excerpts] Yesterday a WPC delegation met behind closed doors with Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, at the Palace of the Herons and with General Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP].

The Panamanian political situation, economic sanctions, and threats of military intervention on the part of the United States were the topics discussed during the meeting with the national leaders.

The delegation composed of retired General Evangelos Kalaitakis of Greece; Prdinsias Macaounghusa of Ireland; Konrad Lubbert of Germany; Han-Kaspar Schimocker of Switzerland; David Welson of Canada; Nathaniel Hill, WPC secretary for Latin America; and Debora Jackson of the United States heard Manuel Solis Palma's profound analysis of Panama's serious situation.

Solis Palma told them that, despite all the difficulties, he is certain that with their presence, the Latin American countries, the Third World countries, and all peace-loving countries that understand the dignity of small countries will progress.

This is "a sacrifice we make at the altar of the dignity of the free and small countries of the world," the minister in charge of the Presidency told the delegation.

The delegates also visited the FDP command to express support for Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega for the Panamanian people's struggle to defend their sovereignty in view of the U.S. aggression." [quotation mark as received]

The delegates voiced their support for Panama, saying that they hope that the Panamanian people's moral strength will lead the United States to change its mind. [passage omitted]

Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega, accompanied by members of the General Staff, thanked the delegates for their visit, noting that "although we are small and weak, we feel endowed with a superior strength, which is based on the conviction that reason is on our side."

He asked the visitors to accept "their appointments as goodwill ambassadors of Panama for the countries they represent."

The WPC delegates, who were accompanied by members of the Panama branch of the WPC, will leave for the United States today to meet with U.S. senators to discuss topics related to Panama and Central America.

Briefs

Retired Major Named Envoy

The president of the Republic has appointed Major Pacifico Saavedra, retired, as Panama's special and plenipotentiary ambassador to El Salvador. [Summary] [*PA2604205188 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 26 Apr 88 p 5*]

Argentina

President Alfonsin To Visit Colombia, PRC

PY260114 Buenos Aires CLARIN in Spanish 25 Apr 88 p 5

[Excerpt] President Raul Alfonsin, who will travel to the PRC on 10 May, will be the first Argentine president to visit that country. Yesterday official sources announced that on 27 April, Alfonsin will begin a 3-day official visit to Colombia, where he will hold talks with his counterpart, President Virgilio Barco Vargas, on the situation in Central America—particularly in Panama—and sign a bilateral agreement on drugs.

Alfonsin will fly over the South Pole to Beijing, stopping over in Auckland, New Zealand.

Alfonsin will make this visit at the official invitation of PRC officials. This trip has been postponed several times because of Argentine domestic problems.

On his way back to Argentina, Alfonsin will make an unofficial visit to Bologna, Italy, where he will receive an honorary degree.

He is expected to return to Buenos Aires on 22 May, the official report stated. [passage omitted]

Alfonsin Meets Paraguayan Opposition Leaders

PY261834 Buenos Aires Domestic Service in Spanish 1600 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Today at noon Paraguay political leaders met with President Raul Alfonsin, to whom they conveyed their solidarity with the democratic process in Argentina and in South American countries. They also addressed the situation of Paraguayan exiles in Argentina, like Miguel Saguier, who has requested political asylum at the Argentine Embassy in Asuncion. The leaders also talked with Alfonsin about the much delayed restoration of democracy in Paraguay, over which Alfredo Stroessner has ruled for so many decades. The main Paraguayan opposition leaders who met with Alfonsin are: Revolutionary Febrerista Party leader Euclides Acevedo, the president of the Christian Democratic Party and of the Colorado Popular Movement, and Authentic Radical Liberal Party leader Domingo Laino. [recorded passage indistinct]

The Paraguayan politicians said that Dr Alfonsin is a great democrat and that Alfonsin agreed with them on the fact that democracy within the framework of human rights has no borders.

Deputy on 'Deep Concern' Over Alfonsin's Health

PY252141 Buenos Aires DYN in Spanish 2012 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 25 Apr (DYN)—Today Deputy Exequiel Avila Gallo of the White Flag Party headed by former Tucuman Governor General Antonio Bussi expressed his "deep concern" over the health of President Raul Alfonsin. He advised the president "to get a medical checkup as soon as possible," considering the importance of this issue.

Avila Gallo warned that the president "is showing psychophysical deterioration in his daily public appearances." He called on the president to get a medical checkup here or abroad and to report on its results "in order to evaluate the possibilities of continuing his administration."

Avila Gallo made public his concern about the president's health in a bill he submitted to the Chamber of Deputies.

In the bill Avila Gallo recalls that "many leaders have been worn out more by mental than by physical stress." In this regard he pointed out that "Hitler's cowardly act of suicide was really the result of a long mental illness which almost led him to destroy the world without caring that the destruction also caused the death and sorrow of his own people."

Army Chief of Staff on U.S. Trip, Cooperation

PY262211 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1630 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 26 Apr (NA)—At the conclusion of a 90-minute meeting with Defense Minister Horacio Jaunarena today, Army Chief of Staff Dante Caridi said that the United States is "very inclined" to support the development of the Argentine defense system.

Caridi said that he and high-ranking U.S. officers analyzed "only items concerning repair and refurbishing of M-113 vehicles and helicopters," adding that "these topics are part of the initial contacts."

Caridi added that once the results of the talks between Minister Jaunarena and Robert Pastorino, assistant secretary of defense, have materialized, "we will analyze other aspects of the supply of materiel and equipment."

Today Caridi met with the defense minister to report on his recent visit to the United States. He returned yesterday.

Asked about any type of assistance Argentina might provide to the U.S. Army, Caridi said "the Americans are interested in knowing about our work and type of instruction in the mountain areas."

"U.S. officers might visit to observe our work in that area," Caridi added.

Asked if the United States is inclined to help Argentina develop its defense system, Caridi said: "Yes, very much so."

Asked if the conflict in the South Atlantic would influence U.S. support to the Argentine Armed Forces, Caridi said "we did not discuss that topic."

"We only talked about the relations between the two Armies, and we found that they are inclined, in fact very inclined, to help," Caridi stressed.

Regarding the U.S. Army opinion of the Argentine Armed Forces, Caridi said "they believe we have a high level of professionalism." He recalled that during the Conference of the Armies of the Americas meeting in Mar del Plata, U.S. Army Chief Carl Vuono "got a very good impression of Argentina's work in the organization of the event."

Regarding internal Argentine Army issues, Caridi denied that the recent military crisis was discussed during his visit. He added that "under no circumstances was that a topic of discussion."

Caridi pointed out that during his trip "we did not discuss political issues; we only discussed military matters."

Regarding armaments, he said that "although this is an exclusive Defense Ministry matter, we discussed items concerning repair and refurbishing of M-113 vehicles and helicopters in the first phase of the talks."

He added: "After this issue is resolved and agreements are reached on the issues discussed by Jaunarena and Pastorino, we will then see other aspects of the purchase of materiel and equipment."

At noon today the Defense Ministry released a communique indicating that the defense minister received a "broad report" from Gen Dante Caridi and that the minister was able to see that "progress was made on the negotiations that began last year relating to the supply of spare parts and equipment by the United States for the Argentine Armed Forces."

The communique concluded by saying that "in a general aspect there was a good inclination to improve the relations between the Armed Forces of the two countries."

Communique on Trip

PY270302 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2335 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 26 Apr (NA)—Today the Army staf announced that during the recent visit that Army Chief of Staff General Dante Caridi paid to the United States, "an efficient coordination system was established between the two Armies in connection with the exchange of personnel, maintenance support, and possible purchases of equipment."

A communique released this afternoon states that the purchase of new equipment depends on the "financial possibilities of Argentina."

Herewith the text of the communique:

"1. The chief of the Army General Staff visited the commands, units, and organizations of the U.S. Army in response to an invitation extended to him by his U.S. peer, General Carl Vuono, during the Conference of the Armies of the Americas (CEA) held at the end of 1987 in our country. The visit has been paid in line with the terms of the agreements that the defense minister reached in previous visits to that nation.

"2. The visit was exclusively professional in nature. The delegation headed by the chief of the Army General Staff attended education, instruction, and training sessions in different military sectors, and observed equipment, weapons, and weapons systems of the U.S. Army.

"3. One of the issues that was specifically considered was the provision of maintenance support for U.S.-made helicopters and armored vehicles.

"4. As a result of the visit, an efficient coordination system was established between the two Armies in connection with the exchange of personnel, maintenance support, and possible purchases of equipment. All this will be subject to the policy to be established in this area by the United States and to the financial capabilities of Argentina.

"5. During the visit, contacts were made with authorities of the Army Secretariat and the State Department. It should be noted that, in total agreement with the U.S. Army, such authorities expressed their predisposition to strengthen the ties between the two Armies, in search of mutual benefit.

"6. It was also possible to confirm that the U.S. Army is clearly aware of the institutional role played by the Argentine Army and of the efforts it has made to promote its professionalization and to modernize its organization and its equipment. The U.S. Army has committed its support for the efforts to achieve these objectives.

"7. Finally, all the activities during the visit were marked by a cordial atmosphere and by expressions of comradeship with the Argentine delegation."

Officers Deny Questioning Crespo's Term

PY252055 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1820 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 25 Apr (NA)—Today Brigadiers Juan Claudio Correa and Carlos Enrique Corino, deputy chief of staff and secretary general of the Air Force,

respectively, categorically denied that Air Force Chief of Staff Ernesto Crespo's term in office was questioned by the commanders at a meeting last Friday.

The two brigadiers made these remarks in response to a report published today by the morning newspaper AMBITO FINANCIERO.

"It is very strange that such an important newspaper would publish false reports that could provoke uneasiness, while all news media have free access to the appropriate channels of the institution, which were not asked for any information regarding the reasons for the meeting," Correa said in a statement released through Commodore Samuel Efrain Echenique, retired, Air Force press chief.

In remarks to Radio Mitre, Brigadier Corino categorically denied the report "simply because the Air Force commanders have no powers to decide on the duration of Brigadier Crespo's term in office."

He said: "In a constitutional system, to which the Air Force and all its commanders are committed, the chief of staff is designated by the civilian leaders."

Ambassador to USSR Comments on Relations

PY251209 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2242 GMT 24 Apr 88

[Text] San Juan, 24 Apr (TELAM)—Federico Bravo, the Argentine ambassador to the Soviet Union, has stressed that the Soviet Government is interested in expanding bilateral trade with Argentina, and he pointed out that there are some small problems in this respect, which we will try to resolve next week.

The diplomat, who is visiting San Juan, said that although trade between Argentina and the Soviet Union is currently less than in the past, good intentions exist for increasing it, basically because the Soviet Government intends to bring its balance of payments into line.

He also commented that although the Soviet people do not know as much about Latin America as the people of Europe do, there is currently a lot of information about our country being channeled through the opening called perestroyka.

Our country and its president, Dr Raul Alfonsin, enjoy respect and consideration for having consolidated democracy during the past few years, Bravo stressed.

Finally, he stated that next week he will meet with Foreign Minister Dante Caputo, and that this meeting will lead to a further improvement of our relations with Russia, which lately have been very good at the cultural level, with the continual exchange of visiting artists.

Foreign Minister Comments on Africa Tour

PY240104 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2312 GMT 23 Apr 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 23 Apr (TELAM)—Today Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo expressed satisfaction with the results of his tour through six West African nations, because several economic agreements, especially related to small- and medium-sized enterprises, were reached.

The foreign minister arrived at 1840 today at the military base of the Aeroparque Metropolitan Airport in Buenos Aires after visiting Ghana, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Gabon, Angola, and Cape Verde.

Upon leaving the T-02 presidential airplane that brought him from Cape Verde, Caputo said: I believe this diplomatic trip to six African nations that have been independent for 30 years has been very useful for Argentine interests.

He added that relations with these nations are useful not only for the role Argentina is playing at the international level but also for the economic ties, especially at the level of small- and medium-sized enterprises. Already at this level there are some Argentine undertakings that require political and institutional support.

Caputo said: The welcome we received and the attention lavished on us by the peoples and governments of the countries we visited leads me to believe that our mission was very useful for our country.

Jorge Mauhourat, Argentine under secretary for foreign policy; Oscar Yuhnovsky, under secretary for international cooperation; and three other officials accompanied Minister Caputo on his trip.

At the airport, the General Press Department issued a summary of the minister's trip, stressing that this is the first time an Argentine foreign minister has visited sub-Saharan countries since their independence. This means that having strengthened its ties with Latin America and the Caribbean, Argentina is seeking to reaffirm its presence in Africa.

The communique added that at the political level a draft proposal for a consultative mechanism among African and Latin American countries on the Atlantic coast has been drawn up, and meetings were held with 5 chiefs of state, 4 heads of government, and 17 ministers of the countries that were visited.

At the economic level the Argentine mission signed framework agreements which seek to promote trade and links between Argentine and African private businessmen, organized business missions to expedite the way for

Argentine exports and the establishment of joint ventures, and invited agriculture and trade ministers of the host countries to visit Argentina, together with groups of businessmen.

At the level of technical cooperation, projects have been established for Argentine technical assistance and cooperation based on the priorities of each host country.

The Africans displayed the most interest in agricultural and livestock development, health, and nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. A proposal was made to establish Argentine experimental farms in Africa to develop technology through Argentine cooperation.

Bolivia

Paz Given Evidence of 'Official' Drug Cover-Up

PY270333 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0229 GMT 27 Apr 88

[Text] La Paz, 26 Apr (EFE)—Today President Victor Paz Estenssoro received a video tape of a film in which well-known political leaders are seen meeting with drug traffickers currently at large.

Yesterday the tape was given to Bolivian Vice President Julio Garrett Aillon—who is the president of Congress—by Freddy Vargas, the chairman of the Constitution, Justice, and Judicial Police Committee of the Chamber of Deputies.

On delivering the video, Vargas said that on several occasions he unsuccessfully tried to meet with the president. He said that the film, which shows Bolivian drug traffickers talking with politicians, military men, and businessmen, will show the president evidence of the official cover-up on drug trafficking and will allow him to take the necessary measures.

Today it was learned that the main actor in the video, which was given to Vargas by a former military men, is Roberto Suarez Gomez, who, until 2 years ago, was known as the "king of cocaine" in Bolivia.

In the meantime, today it was reported that the government has been granted credits for $24 million for implementing its plan to reduce coca plantations.

Anibal Aguilar, who is the under secretary for Alternative Development and Substitution of Coca Crop, said that $15 million was provided by the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), $5 million by the Italian Government, and $4 million by Great Britain.

The Paz Estenssoro administration wants to eliminate, in 3 years, 80 percent of the approximately 60,000 hectares of coca plantations that are believed to exist in the country.

Foreign Minister on Budget, Decentralization

PY261335 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] The government expects the budget to be approved without major modifications and without changes in the allocations, Foreign Minister Guillermo Bedregal has said. Bedregal said he disagrees with some of the suggestions of the IMF to reduce public investment. I do not agree, he said, adding that he invited the IMF to analyze the issue. Bedregal said the guidelines set by the executive branch must be respected to allow for an improvement at the different levels, especially for the purpose of meeting the objectives of this fiscal year.

Concerning the decentralization and other government proposals, Bedregal said:

[Begin Bedregal recording] The modernization of the state is a worldwide trend. I would not call it decentralization, but regionalization of development from an operational viewpoint. The rules and the strategy are designed by the state, while the implementation must be carried out by the regional organs. This is particularly important for the education and health areas. It is an area that [words indistinct] so that we may again analyze our criteria next Thursday in search of a consensus. This consensus is also linked to the budget law. We want the budget to be completely feasible. In previous years, unfortunately, the budgets were only partially implemented because of the lower income. We want this budget to promote development and reactivation. [end recording]

Bedregal said it is hoped the debate on the budget will meet the government's expectations from a realistic viewpoint.

Official on Impact of Budget on Antidrug Fight

PY251432 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] Government official Jorge Alderete Rosales has reported that the budget allocation requested by the social defense under secretary has been reduced by more than 50 percent, and that the under secretariat will not be able to perform its activities with the planned disbursement. He voiced his concern over the considerable reduction, which will negatively affect the development of various activities, adding that with a reduced budget it will be very difficult to perform specific tasks against drug trafficking. Alderete Rosales said the budget allocation provides for not only managerial expenses, but also hiring civilian informers and other types of expenses that have not been provided for.

Planning Minister To Seek Financial Credits

PY261441 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 27 Apr 88

[All figures as heard]

[Text] The government will try to obtain a credit of approximately $300 million from the IMF and another loan of $600 million from the World Bank. In order to

carry out this operation responsibly, the president ordered Planning Minister Gonzalo Sanchez de Losada to head a delegation that will visit Washington. According to Sanchez de Losada, the delegation will leave for Washington next Saturday.

[Begin Sanchez de Losada recording] The objective is to negotiate a $60-million credit with the World Bank for the financial sector. This credit will help the reactivation. We will also complete the negotiations with the IMF. Therefore, this will be a very busy week. The president wants to review several topics which are dealt with at different government levels, so the mission should receive all the necessary support and authorizations. [end recording]

The minister believes that the reactivation is being implemented despite the many adverse factors, adding that sectors like clothing and other industrial fields are reflecting economic reactivation.

[Begin Sanchez de Losada recording] There are problems, because if we do not pay $90 million immediately, we will be delayed. Yet the information we have at hand shows that the economy continues to grow, although not as steadily as we would have expected and liked. The construction sector is growing steadily. The people are investing in their houses. We also see that the industrial sector is doing better. The mining and agriculture sectors are a bit slower. The reactivation is not a complete success, but we are moving forward. The objective of this government—which is obvious—is stability and growth. I hope our achievement will not be stability alone. We are struggling, and the $60-million loan from the World Bank is one of the factors that will help us. It will be earmarked for credits to productive sectors at low interest rates. This will be of great help to the economy.

As I have repeatedly said, the reactivation grows like a tree, a bit everywhere—the branches, the leaves—but obviously this does not go any further than [words indistinct] we are obviously behind our schedule, but the reasons are known. Yet we are moving forward, and we believe we will succeed. [end recording]

COB Leaders Begin Hunger Strike 25 April

PY261521 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Excerpts] The Bolivian Medical Association, the Bolivian Red Cross, and the Human Rights Standing Assembly will supervise the hunger strike of the labor leaders. The following COB leaders began the fast in La Paz yesterday afternoon: Simon Reyes, Juan Rocha, Julio Arce, Miguel Heredia, Jose Luis Flores, Jaime de la Torre, (Luis Inturia), Carlos Rivero, Alberto Soto, Francisco Checo, Felipe Tapia, Carlos Camargo, and (Raul Omirei). During a news conference, a document was released to the press explaining that the objective of the fast is to obtain a fair salary hike proportionate to the increase in the cost of living, to reject the plan to decentralize the health and education sectors, and to obtain a fair budget for the universities. [passage omitted]

COB Secretary General Heriberto Mamani has called upon the organizations belonging to COB to support the great national march scheduled for 28 April.

[Begin Mamani recording] All national, departmental, and regional organizations are hereby asked to join the national protest march on Thursday, 28 April. In La Paz, there will be a rally at Plaza San Francisco at 1500, before the march. In rural towns, the march will be staged in keeping with the traditional procedures established by each departmental labor central. [end recording]

This is what the COB communique states on the hunger strike. The journalists asked the COB leaders about several topics, among them the attitude they will adopt if Congress postpones the debate on the decentralization plan. They replied that a COB meeting ordered the hunger strike; only another COB meeting could decide to end it.

Simon Reyes said the government can declare the state of siege, but without this decision there is no legal excuse for repression or police raids on labor central offices.

[Begin Reyes recording] Well, from a constitutional viewpoint, it is obvious the government can declare a state of siege, although not all individual guarantees are suspended under the state of siege. But if a state of siege is not declared, the government has no legal excuse for raiding houses or labor offices, because this would amount to trespassing by force, as they did in the case of the oil workers. We condemned that action, and we know the goverment is capable of it. Yet there are no legal grounds for such action, because no law sets forth that we cannot begin a voluntary fast as a peaceful protest against the government policy, which has increased unemployment, frozen salaries, and destroyed the health and education sectors. What they are doing is a transfer, not a decentralization. We know that the government can resort to illegal actions... [changes thought] I don't know. The government would have to impose the state of siege. But without a state of siege, whatever the government does will be brutality and trespassing. But they have the power, and they can do it. [end recording]

Ministers Criticize Action

PY251428 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] Government officials have charged that COB is seeking to create an atmosphere of unrest, with unpredictable consequences for our country. Foreign Minister Guillermo Bedregal and Information Minister Herman Antelo voiced concern over the preservation of peace and tranquillity in the country which, they maintained, can be disturbed by the hunger strike sponsored by COB

and by other attitudes. Bedregal said he cannot understand the labor leaders, who are promoting unrest instead of proposing final solutions. Antelo said the COB coercive measure is blackmail aimed at preventing Congress from impartially debating the decentralization of the health and education sectors.

The two ministers, however, said they hope this new coercive measure—which according to them shows little imagination—will not succeed as expected by its sponsors.

Measures have been taken in the past few hours to prevent the disruption of order. The Bolivian police have been placed on alert, and the intelligence agencies have redoubled their efforts to detect subversive activities.

The executive branch is concerned about the upcoming visit of Pope John Paul II. As a host country, it is not good for Bolivia to be in a situation of extreme disorder, a government source said.

It is feared that COB and the leftist political parties may not respect the gentlemen's agreement that has established a truce during the pope's visit to our country.

COB Criticizes Government Economic Policy

PY261846 La Paz PRESENCIA in Spanish 17 Apr 88 p 1

[Excerpts] Thirty-six years ago today Bolivian workers founded the Bolivian Labor Confederation. The COB Executive Committee issued a pronouncement to commemorate the occasion, saying that this organization "summarizes the past, present, and future struggle of the Bolivian people" and currently constitutes "the flag bearer of the struggle against Decree No 21,060." (Decree establishing the government's economic policy) [passage omitted]. The declaration explains how the COB leads the people's struggle against the government's economic policy "because to date the joint MNR-ADN government has paralyzed COMIBOL's productive apparatus and has thrown over 23,000 miners into the streets under the 'euphemistically' called 'relocation' program. This government has also destroyed the entire national manufacturing sector and thrown into the streets thousands of workers on the theory of the 'market economy' and 'free hiring.'"

Decree No 21,060 has also "made gasoline the basis of the national economy and tried to destroy YPFB as it did COMIBOL. Not totally pleased with the destruction of the nation for the benefit of a few rich individuals grouped in the new cartel, the government has now turned against the University of Bolivia and against the health and education services that belong to all Bolivians. The government is trying to transfer these state obligations, which are more permanent and go deeper than a transitory government, to the municipalities and development corporations under a program of decentralization."

The declaration concludes by saying that "COB represents the expression of the Bolivian nation because it represents the majority of peasants, mine workers, and city workers. The impoverished middle class will emerge victorious from its struggle against those who are destroying the fatherland and against the dictators presently disguised as democrats."

Brazil

Fluorine Technology for Enrichment Developed

PY260322 Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 23 Apr 88 p 26

[By Alvaro Pereira]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] Studies for the production of gaseous fluorine at IPEN [Institute for Nuclear and Energy Research] began in 1957. The mistaken prediction was that the research would take between 8 and 10 years. In the 1970's an IPEN team visited Montedison Industries in Milan (northern Italy), one of the few world producers of gaseous fluorine (the two-atom fluorine molecule; we should not mistake the gas for the element fluorine). On learning Brazil's intention, the Italians refused to discuss it. Beginning with what can be learned in literature, in 1978 the IPEN researchers built the first production unit.

The production of gaseous fluorine was essential for the institute. According to IPEN Superintendant Claudio Rodrigues, the production of fluorine gas "was the technology needed for the development of the process." Rodrigues was referring to the final objective of the fluorine-uranium relationship: the enrichment of uranium for use as nuclear fuel. The only center capable of achieving this at an industrial level is the Aramar Research Center, which the Navy dedicated on 8 April in Ipero (125 km west of Sao Paulo). There, uranium is enriched in centrifuges that separate the variety of uranium that is of nuclear fuel interest, uranium 235, from the more abundant uranium 238. [passage omitted]

Two reactions take place in the same reactor: the uranium trioxide (UO_3) makes contact with hydrogen to remove oxygen and hydrofluoric acid to supply the four fluorine atoms. What comes out of the reactor is uranium tetrafluoride. There is still a need for two "fluorines," which are provided by gaseous fluorine (F_2). To manufacture F_2, according to IPEN Nuclear Materials Director Alcidio Abrao, IPEN had to resolve problems such as corrosion, recombination of products, and temperature control. [passage omitted]

Abrao said that accidents with fluorine at IPEN happened solely because of the operator's lack of attention, because "all the necessary equipment has been supplied." Should the IPEN production complex work at full capacity, it would produce 160 tons per year of hexafluoride for enrichment.

Brazil, PRC To Launch Satellites in 1992

PY221413 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 22 Apr 88

[Text] Brazil and the PRC will launch two space satellites, the first one in 1992 and the second 2 years later.

These satellites will collect information for agriculture, mineral prospecting, and cartography.

The agreement for the satellites' launching will be signed during President Sarney's visit to the PRC in July.

Colombia

Army Arrests Five Suspected FARC Guerrillas

PA2604195588 Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1215 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Five suspected FARC guerrillas were arrested by Army troops who uncovered a terrorist plan against military and police installations in Caqueta Department.

Colonel Guillermo Montoya Parra, a member of the general staff of the 12th Army Brigade Command based in Florencia, reported that during the operation, 700 sticks of dynamite were confiscated in 3 vehicles in which the explosives were being transported. Col Montoya Parra said that the counterinsurgency operation took place in the area of Puerto Umbria on the road from Florencia, capital of Caqueta Department, to Doncello.

Briefs

Air Force Commander Resigns

General Gilberto Franco has resigned as Air Force commander. The high-ranking officer apparently decided to retire in light of the scandal caused by the theft of an Aerocommander at Catam Airport. The government will be appointing General Alfredo Ortega as his replacement. [Text] [*PA2104140388 Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 2 in Spanish 0000 GMT 21 Apr 88*]

Paraguay

Stroessner Accepts Invitation To Visit Taiwan

PY260346 Asuncion ULTIMA HORA in Spanish 25 Apr 88 p 13

[Excerpt] The new president of Taiwan, Li Teng-hui, has reiterated to Paraguayan President Alfredo Stroessner an official invitation to visit that Asian nation for the second time.

This morning Taiwan Ambassador to Paraguay General Sheng Wang met with President Stroessner and extended the invitation. He was accompanied by the military attache, Colonel Manuel Li Shi-lin.

The Paraguayan president accepted the invitation to travel soon to Taiwan, and he stated that the date will be set in due time. It is estimated that the trip will take place this year.

It was also confirmed that Taiwan Foreign Minister Ding Mou-shih will visit Paraguay in May this year on the occasion of Paraguayan independence day festivities. [passage omitted]

Politicians React to Visit by Walters

Colorado Deputy

PY251527 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 24 Apr 88 p 11

[Text] Roberto Velazquez Escobar, president of the Chamber of Deputies Foreign Affairs Committee, has said: "I believe that what Mr Walters said about relations between Paraguay and the United States is the truth. In fact, we have always said relations between the two countries are suitable and cordial, but that there are people who probably seek to mar that relationship."

The Colorado Party politician was also asked whether he thought that Vernon Walters' comment that the Paraguayan-U.S. relationship "was not all that bad" did not contradict what Ambassador Taylor had said.

The legislator said: "Paraguay and its government have always respected the principles, way of thinking, and rules of the Western world. Democracy has been established in the country, and the determination of sovereign countries is respected. In this regard, we have always supported the U.S. stance, especially regarding the struggle against Marxist communism, and currently in the struggle against the problem of drug trafficking, which affects the entire world and should be eradicated at all levels."

Velazquez said that "Ambassador Walters' comments on Paraguay were very wise, sensible, and diplomatic."

PLRA Member

PY251710 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 25 Apr 88 p 23

[Text] Francisco Jose de Vargas, member of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party [PLRA] and human rights coordinator of the Churches Committee, commenting on the recent heated meeting Vernon Walters held with Paraguayan opposition politicians and representatives of human rights organizations in our country, said that "the meeting with Ambassador Vernon Walters was truly regrettable. The high concept I had of U.S. diplomacy during the past few years has received a hard blow."

De Vargas said that "Walters may have been a military man, but he obviously does not have the necessary training of self-control to exercise the high-ranking diplomatic post he holds."

He went on to say that "this man, Walters, was very nervous, and the state he was in prevented any possible dialogue. He entered the room, took a seat, and said: 'You are the second opposition group I have met. Start talking, I am all ears.' He said this in a very harsh but respectful tone of voice, and I think this is the only worthy thing he said. The rest makes no sense and has no explanation."

De Vargas also said: Walters "insulted the five of six people who were there. He did not even show any respect for the two ladies invited to the meeting. Ambassador Taylor did all he could to make the meeting run smoothly, but Walters did all he possibly could and a little more to make it a flop."

The PLRA leader said: "I still do not understand how we put up with so much insolence and ill manners without getting up and walking out. We probably did not do so out of respect for that great country of the north and its ambassador, Mr Taylor. The meeting was thwarted, but I suppose the one Walters held with Stroessner was quite different from ours. That is why it lasted so long."

Christian Democrat Leader

PY251359 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish
24 Apr 88 p 11

[Text] Christian Democratic leader Raul Andrada Nogues said that General Vernon Walters' comment that the relationship between Paraguay and the United States "is not all that bad" only confirms what Ambassador Taylor said: "Our relationship with the United States has potholes."

Andrada Nogues was asked whether he thought Walters' statement contradicted what the U.S. ambassador to Paraguay said about the relationship between our two countries. He answered: "I think he is affirming the ambassador's statement, because to say that 'it is not all that bad' means that it is not good, and if it is not good, it means it has potholes."

Nogues added that "a visitor who is the ambassador of his country to an important organization like the United Nations and a member of President Reagan's cabinet is not going to be rude. One must not only read what is written, but also between the lines; Walters' visit undoubtedly represents an act of support for the U.S. ambassador and an affirmation of the U.S. foreign policy regarding Paraguay."

He concluded by saying that "the important thing is that a visitor who is just passing by would have normally just paid the president of the Republic a protocol visit. However, they talked for 1 and 1/2 hours, and, personally, I do not think they just discussed fishing and hunting. If the meeting lasted that long, it was because they had important and urgent subjects to discuss. The coherence of the U.S. policy regarding Paraguay should be noted."

PATRIA on Meeting Between Saguier, Abrams

PY240311 Asuncion PATRIA in Spanish
23 Apr 88 p 7

[Editorial: "A Case of Indescribable Naivete"]

[Text] We are not going to say that Elliott Abrams is a useful fool. We will say he is the most naive of all Quakers, that he readily believes everyone's words without checking them out, and that he takes drastic and irreversible actions when he realizes he has been fooled.

As these words show, we are trying to have the best possible opinion of the assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs. In good faith, we are trying to understand the reasons that may be hidden behind the offenses he has freely inflicted upon Paraguay and Paraguayan democracy by calling a roving adventurer like Miguel Abdon Saguier a great Paraguayan leader. The reasons become even more difficult for us to understand because Saguier has slandered and defamed his country and its officials by spreading groundless rumors that have become totally discredited after only weeks, even in the eyes of Abrams, if he is a real Quaker and can reason.

Traveling on a U.S. Embassy courtesy visa, the adventurous Saguier went to the United States to attend a lecture of the Association for Latin American Studies, one of the numerous pro-Marxist front groups in that Northern Hemisphere country, as demonstrated by the mischievous activities of the sadly notorious activist Robert White [former U.S. ambassador to Paraguay]. Saguier then left New Orleans for Washington, where by some unrevealed trick he managed to be received by Elliott Abrams. After the meeting, Saguier was interviewed by several news agency reporters, who sold their subscribers more of the rumors that so please the media addicts. In those interviews, Andrews L. Lluberes (please write down this artist's name carefully) gathered the information which he conveyed to the "well-informed" USIS. USIS then sent the information to the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay, which took care to spread it. We must state all this clearly so that this joke of turning an agitator into a celebrity can be quickly and well understood. It is a joke to make a celebrity out of an agitator who can act like a fanatical admirer of the United States every time he wants to incite a U.S. Government official against Paraguay, or a fanatic "anti-imperialist" whenever he wants to flatter a politician, leader, or important person from some other country that may harbor resentment against the United States for preferring the United Kingdom or for any other reason.

Be that as it may, the truth is that this guy felt like a celebrity after his meeting with Elliott Abrams, mostly because he was mentioned as the leader of a "party." For a long time, Saguier has been trying to make believe that the subversive faction—actually a sub-faction shared with his brother Hermes—of the "party" that is led by "Tovarich" Laino is a real party. For this reason, Saguier is very happy about the entire event. At least in the articles published by the reporters who interviewed him after the meeting, his political faction is referred to as a party.

What Miguel Abdon Saguier said on that occasion was pure fiction, as can be attested to by anyone who lives in Paraguay and can read the popular sentiment. According to the USIS reporter (glad to know, and congratulations), "the authentics" constitute—in Saguier's view—"the most popular group of the Paraguayan opposition." Then referring to his interviewee, the USIS reporter said "he was optimistic despite Stroessner's recent reelection for yet another presidential term and the victory of the intransigent wing of the progovernment Colorado Party."

Without realizing it, Saguier stumbled over his own words in some sort of rhetorical mishap. He said nothing about his "party's" chances of winning and raised no hopes about the possibility of reuniting the various antagonistic factions of the original Liberal Party. Actually, Saguier is only the de facto leader of a subfaction of a faction, with no organization, mandate, or people—a subfaction separated from the other faction because it occupies a secondary orbit in the cosmos created after the Liberal Party's big bang. He had no reason to talk about a supposed "intransigent" wing of the Colorado Party because he knows that such a wing does not exist as a faction of the party, which has a mass of followers. That wing only exists in the conversation of unruly elements around coffee shop tables, because they never succeeded in polarizing the popular will as has been done by the powerful political association that remains loyal to President Stroessner. The Colorado Party is loyal to its leader precisely because he was been able pull the country out of the abyss of political atomization, instability, a state of emergency, underdevelopment, and resignation to a second-rate fate of isolation, backwardness, darkness, ignorance, and disease—after having been the most prosperous country in the region and having gallantly overcome the bloodshed of two international wars. President Stroessner was the one who took the initiative to reunite the divided Colorado Party and then to open the door for the democratic participation of the parties of the opposition. And they continue to participate, with the exception of antidemocratic and radicalized factions. Miguel Abdon Saguier, who is socially and politically resented, lines up with one of the subfactions of those factions for personal reasons related to his inability to adapt to coexistence, dialogue, and democracy—even within the Liberal Party. Thus, he ended up in the damp and dark cellar of conspiracy, intransigence, and irrationality, more appropriate for a caveman. But we will not try to plumb further into Miguel Abdon Saguier's personal reasons for such behavior. Only a caveman with a stunted mind could disregard the common good just to vent his hatred and passions, in order to confuse the opposition with defamation, dissidence, and intrigue. And this is the man Elliott Abrams listened to; the man whose statements were reproduced by the USIS reporter Lluberes. Saguier's statement that "I believe the Paraguayan Government protects drug traffickers and the government's connection with drug traffickers has been proven..." can be considered just another dirty deed of the illegal opposition.

In order to prove the irresponsibility and thoughtlessness of his perverse and senseless words, Saguier added: "The drug business has political consequences, because those who are involved in it are members of the government. So they are opposed to any political liberalization, simply because under the present situation there is no control or punishment." Didn't Saguier realize that he opposes liberalization through his refusal to participate in elections, just like all the militants of the illegal opposition—dissidents within their own party or members who have been expelled from their own party? They are the ones who "agreed" to turn their back on democracy by refusing to enter elections in which the majority determines the popular will.

Contrary to what this intrigue-mongering turncoat has said, the government of President Stroessner, together with the majority Colorado Party and the participating democratic opposition, keeps the liberalization process going, without the participation of the abstensionists of the illegal opposition. This character is a militant member of this opposition, and yet with a Quakerish naivete which he might now regret, Elliott Abrams said with an enthusiasm worthy of a better cause that he was "glad" to have known him, adding that he found Miguel Abdon Saguier "to be a sensible, moderate man devoted, body and soul, to democracy." We would be concerned about the fate of the United States if it were to depend on the judgment of such a gullible man as Elliott Abrams.

Saldivar Returns From South Africa, Europe

PY251413 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 25 Apr 88 p 15

[Text] Foreign Minister Dr Carlos A. Saldivar has returned to our country after paying an official visit to South Africa and after holding important meetings with international agency officials in Europe. During his absence, his duties in Asuncion were discharged by Justice and Labor Minister Dr J. Eugenio Jacquet.

During his visit to South Africa, the minister took the necessary steps to promote bilateral relations, particularly in the economic area. In this regard, it should be noted that it was necessary to update an economic agreement Paraguay and South Africa signed 10 years ago.

After visiting South Africa, Saldivar went to Europe, where in Switzerland he met with Jan Materson, United Nations assistant secretary general for human rights, and

other United Nations directors. The objective of those meetings was to tighten the cooperation with those United Nations agencies in order to clarify the situations that affect our country, like our human rights record.

Dr Saldivar said that nothing is concealed in Paraguay as far as human rights are concerned, because there are neither dead nor missing people, and that to some extent this is a privileged situation.

New Radical Liberal Executive Board Installed

PY260343 Asuncion ULTIMA HORA in Spanish 25 Apr 88 p 9

[Text] The executive board of the Radical Liberal Party (PLR), which was elected during the controversial convention last week, was installed during a meeting at the home of Mario Esteche Notario, at 1111 Aporipy Street.

Dr Percio Franco chaired the meeting, during which the new members of the board were installed. The board includes: Dr Assad Yore Ismael, president; Mario Soza Campuzano, vice president; Dr Carlos Arce Bazan, second vice president; Pablo Nicanor Ramirez, general secretary; and Federico Gill Garcete, recording secretary.

During the meeting, cables recognizing the Yore-led board were read. PLR members Atilio Llano del Puerto and Jose del Rosario Ocampos presented their resignations from the currently recognized "Democratic Center."

Several noted Liberal figures such as Dr Enzo Alejandro Doldan attended the meeting. Integration Movement leaders Nestor Moragas, Blas Manuel Mangabeira, Luis Alberto Kallsen, and Colonel Alcibiades Irrazabal, retired, expressed support for the newly elected board.

Dr Yore announced that measures are under way to register the new board at the Central Electoral Register.

Peru

Interior Minister on Modifying Terrorism Law

PY261436 Lima Domestic Service in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Interior Minister Jose Barsallo Burga has expressed the need to modify the law against terrorism and proposed that the death sentence be instituted for terrorists.

Barsallo Burga requested that an emergency law be enacted to give the Peruvian Investigative Police [PIP] further freedom to investigate leaders. [sentence as heard] The current Interior Ministry organic law restricts the PIP's actions, he said.

The interior minister also requested that a law against the promotion of terrorist actions [delito de apologia del terrorismo] be enacted. He also deplored the judicial branch granting early releases to subversives.

He likewise denied that the mayor and prefect of the (Aillo Ichoco) district of Arequipa were murdered for being subversives.

He reported that eight subversives were arrested in Huanta. Four of these terrorists are charged with murdering civilians and policemen.

Venezuela

Lusinchi on Procurement, Strike, Japan Trip

PA2604192788 Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 in Spanish 1600 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] Dr Jaime Lusinchi, when assuming responsibilities as Venezuelan president and commander in chief of the Armed Forces and military procurement, gave assurances that his government would continue with this [procurement] program, while also rejecting reports that have questioned the purchase of military equipment. After explaining in detail the negotiating process, the president explained the procedures followed when procurement operations are suspect.

[Lusinchi] "I must categorically tell the country: In all cases where we have had unresolved doubts over a certain purchase or over the behavior of some supplier, we have ordered an examination of the whole process and we have eliminated any extraneous factor or vested interest, always ensuring that negotiations are carried out directly with the manufacturers and preferably from government to government. These safeguards have ensured important savings for the country. We shall continue this way.

"Venezuelans can be absolutely certain that if in the process of supplying our Armed Forces we were to ascertain that someone made illegal profits, I would be the first to act to ensure that he be punished to the fullest extent of the law, because I would feel that he not only committed this crime, but also committed an act of treason against the Armed Forces and the country. However, such a conclusion cannot be based on alleged irregularities or based on incomplete or biased information that, when compared with reliable sources, lack the necessary substantiation required by law."

Lusinchi clarified that at the beginning of his term, he decided to undertake a general maintenance, updating, and modernization plan with regard to military equipment and in accordance with the reasonable needs of the General Staff of each of the forces and the military high command. Along with these requirements, there was also the assurance that the Armed Forces would receive adequate supplies to be fully operational.

Another of the topics discussed by President Lusinchi was the university crisis. He said that the teachers' strike that has paralyzed the universities for nearly 4 months is

a profoundly socially unjust act, because it not only affects the public sector, but also higher education. In his message to the country, the president reiterated that his government cannot seek easy ways out through budgetary promises that later cannot be met. However, he clarified that during his term national universities have been given a reasonable budget compared to previous years, and he called upon teachers and students to resume their educational activities.

[Lusinchi] "We all agree that it is imperative that we make the leaders of the conflict understand the absolute need for reopening the university, and, once back to normal, that problems be discussed and adequate solutions be sought with available resources. I should point out that the stubborn attitude of a few has led to the squandering of a third of the 1988 university budget and the irrevocable loss of precious time for study and research.

"During my political career I have never faltered when faced with personal prejudice; that is why tonight I do not hesitate to make an appeal, with humility and anguish, to the consciences of the great majority of teachers, workers, and university employees to ask them in the name of the Venezuelan people to return to class."

The main topic of Lusinchi's message to the country was his recent trip to several Asian countries, especially Japan, where important cooperation, financial, business, and cultural agreements were reached. On these matters, Dr Lusinchi said that Japan's great spirit of cooperation means new possibilities for Venezuela for integral development through the discovery of new horizons. Lusinchi said that it was the right moment to define positions of mutual interest for both countries' development through the integration of interests for the common good.

[Lusinchi] "We took a look at the world situation, the economic question, relations between Japan and the Western world, the debt, and protectionism; the possibilities of cooperation between our two countries; the problems inherent in a modern society, especially drugs and terrorism; and the practical way in which we could work together toward the basic goal of permanent support for world peace and the political, economic, and social development of our peoples and of all humanity."

Guyana

Supreme Soviet Delegation Head on C. America

FL2504154088 Bridgetown CANA in English 1639 GMT 24 Apr 88

[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, April 24, CANA—The Soviet Union has no military and political plans whatsoever for Central America, a senior politician said here Saturday.

But Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Mokanu, vice president of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, told newsmen the Soviet Union was seriously worried about a blazing fire of hotbeds of tensions in Central America.

The vice president heads a six-member parliamentary delegation to Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. He told newsmen the Soviet Union strongly condemned the forces which pursue the policy of state terrorism against Nicaragua.

It is impossible to understand and accept the policy of imposing systems of power on a sovereign state which it rejects, he commented.

He said the Soviet Union wishes to believe that there is a growing number of signs testifying to the fact that the policy of ensuring a mutually acceptable settlement of regional conflicts is making headway in international relations.

He said in this regard, Nicaragua's position of goodwill in implementing the Guatemala agreements and the policy of national reconciliation being pursued by the Governments of Afghanistan and Cambodia should evoke an adequate response.

Noting that the Soviet Union is now passing through the growing process of profound transformation, the Soviet vice-president said his delegations current visit to the region is being undertaken in keeping with a decision by the USSR Supreme Soviet to foster contacts and cooperation with parliaments of all countries of the world regardless of their socio-political systems.

He said the practice of establishing contacts with the parliaments of nearly 100 nations shows that notwithstanding the diversity of views and opinions of the parliamentarians of various states, they are united by the commonality on interests in appoaching the major problems of today.

And, noting that the major problems include the struggle for peace, stronger international security, curbing the arms race and the preventing of nuclear wars, Mokanu stressed that there are no large and small countries and nations when survival of civilisation is at stake.

He said there are now new features and aspects about the situation in the world today and the Soviet Union believes that the opportunity to discuss key problems of today with parliamentarians of Caribbean countries should not be missed.

The Soviet parliamentary delegation which arrived here on Wednesday was scheduled to leave for Port-of-Spain last night to spend a few days before moving on to Jamaica.

While here, the delegation paid courtesy calls on President Desmond Hoyte, Prime Minister Hamilton Green and Speaker of the National Assembly Sase Naraine and met with local parliamentarians and visited places of interest including Guyana's big water control project, the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary agricultural development project.

Delegation To Visit USSR To Discuss Bauxite

FL2604010988 Bridgetown CANA in English 2303 GMT 24 Apr 88

[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, April 24, CANA—A Guyanese delegation is expected to visit the Soviet Union shortly to continue discussions on proposals for possible Soviet participation in the further development of Guyana's bauxite industry, Soviet officials here reported.

According to the Soviet ambassador in Guyana, Anatoliy Ulanov, the discussions will focus on proposals for expanding operations at Ituni, one of the state-owned mines. He told a press conference Saturday the discussions were started last year when a special economic delegation from the Soviet Union visited Guyana. Since then, a technical team visited Guyana and worked along with their Guyanese counterparts in formulating some proposals. It is hoped, he said, that when the Guyanese team visits the Soviet Union shortly in connection with the proposed project, the technical details will be finalised.

Canadian Parliamentary Team Ends 3-Day Visit

FL2704003588 Bridgetown CANA in English 2006 GMT 26 Apr 88

[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, April 26, CANA—A three-member Canadian parliamentary team was on Tuesday wrapping up a three-day unofficial visit to Guyana. The Canadians visited a number of projects being undertaken with assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The parliamentarians—Peter Bosa, Robert Muir, and Robert Tennock—arrived in Guyana over the week-end accompanied by Gordon Longmuir, director of the Caribbean and Latin American Relations Division in Canada's Department of External Affairs.

In addition to visiting CIDA-assisted projects, they paid courtesy calls on Foreign Affairs Minister Rashleigh Jackson, Speaker of the National Assembly Sase Narain, Georgetown Mayor Robert Williams, and head of the department of International Economic Cooperation, Dr Cecil Rajana.

CWC Shifts Secretariat to Georgetown

FL2604004588 Bridgetown CANA in English 2045 GMT 25 Apr 88

[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, April 25, CANA—The Caribbean Workers Council (CWC), grouping several regional labour unions, has shifted its secretariat from Curacao to Guyana, the organisation's Secretary-General Paul Tennassee said at the weekend.

According to Tennassee, who is also the leader of the Democratic Labour Movement (DLM), one of Guyana's small right-of-centre political parties, the CWC is an outgrowth of the Confederation of Latin American Workers (CLAT) and of the World Confederation of Labour (WCL).

The CWC, he said, was established by CLAT affiliates in the French, Spanish, Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean in 1970 in Curacao. Among its affiliates are the Antigua Trades and Labour union, the All Trinidad Sugar and General Workers Union, the National Workers Union of St Lucia, the National Workers Movement of St Vincent and the Grenadines, the Dominica Amalgamated Workers Union and the National Workers Union of Guyana.

According to Tennassee, the CWC is a firm believer in Caribbean integration and the shifting of its headquarters to Georgetown, the seat of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) Secretariat, will enable the CWC to play a more active role in the integration process. The CWC, he added, will shortly organise in Guyana a colloquium on Caribbean integration. It will also coordinate with the Caribbean Institute of Social Formation, a number of seminars on privatisation and the labour movement to be held in several Caribbean countries.

Tennassee, a former lecturer at the University of Guyana who was fired in 1982, said since his election as secretary-general of the CWC and to the CLAT executive in 1985 he was instrumental in getting the CWC secretariat shifted to Guyana.

NOTES